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RIOT IN EPHEBUS

WRITINGS ON
THE HERITAGE OF GREECE

CHARLES SELTMAN



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CHARLES SELTMAN

TOWARDS the end of 1949, I happened to receive for review from the editor of a weekly journal a delightfully written and beautifully illustrated volume entitled *Masterpieces of Greek Coinage*. My qualifications as a reviewer were scanty; and I must, I suppose, have solicited the job myself. I knew then - I still know - very little of the science of numismatics; and my classical education had come to an end soon after I went up to Oxford. But I had long been a lover of Greek coins, although what I appreciated was their visual and tactile charm rather than their strictly historical interest; and in my review I attempted to convey my enjoyment of these minor triumphs of Hellenic art. It elicited a letter from the author thanking me for my appreciative notice; and thenceforward he became a friend who sometimes visited me in London and with whom, on one happy occasion, I spent a couple of summer days at Cambridge. He often contributed to the papers I edited - first of all to the *Cornhill*, for which he wrote a characteristic essay entitled 'Atalanta': later, to *History Today*, where, between 1951 and 1956, he published fourteen admirable articles on subjects as varied as St Paul and Diana of the Ephesians, Diogenes, Peisistratus, and the importance of the wine trade in ancient Greece. During our collaboration, we frequently corresponded; and, strangely enough, it was the journalist, not his scholarly contributor, who was inclined to adopt the more conservative attitude. Mine was the caution, his the exuberance. There were moments when he seemed to accuse me of taking a slightly puritanical line. . . .

For Charles Seltman's uninhibited love of life was among his most endearing traits. I remember that, in his rooms at Cambridge, on a ledge above a bookshelf, he had arranged a small

group of antique statuettes which, as he explained when he saw me inspecting them, represented the harmony we should seek to achieve between Heavenly and Earthly Love. Here was Priapus, whose traditional insignia plainly told their own tale; there, by way of counterbalance, stood the Celestial Aphrodite and Isis the Egyptian mother-goddess. Priapus may perhaps have surprised some of the academic ladies whom he entertained at tea; but the shameless statuette was an integral part of his scheme; and he would have resented any suggestion that in a scholar's study it was out of place. He was proud to call himself a classical Humanist. After all, his rooms at Queens', which he inhabited for twenty industrious years, had once been inhabited by the great Erasmus, whose attacks on Folly had done so much to liberate and enrich the modern European mind. Erasmus, with his keen inquisitive smile, still haunted those oak-panelled chambers. His successor, so long as he lived, remained entirely innocent of a medieval sense of sin.

Human stupidity, rather than human wickedness, was the giant at which Seltman tilted; and he attributed most of our common misfortunes not to the unruliness of natural instincts but to the perversions of misguided intelligence. As a feminist, he felt an especial dislike for the character and teachings of St Paul, whom he associated with the subjection of women, which, so he believed, had begun to be practised under the maleficent influence of Pauline Christianity. True, Greek society had had the reputation of treating women in a somewhat shabby manner; but he had convinced himself that this reputation was very largely undeserved. Hellenic women had been happy and healthy and free – did not young girls exercise naked among the Spartan athletes? – and he was fond of demonstrating, with a wealth of lively detail, just how carefree and how unabashed they were.

His fellow scholars, I understand, at least in questions of this sort, occasionally objected to Charles Seltman's judgments. They did not dispute, however, his authoritative knowledge of coins; and the fact that he published 'popular' articles – in which he intro-

duced the results of scholarship to an audience of general readers – although, no doubt, it struck them as faintly shocking, was accepted as an amiable vagary. Even over an academic problem, it would have been difficult to pick a quarrel with Seltman; for he himself was the quintessence of good nature, and, like many men who really enjoy living, walked through life surrounded by a sunny aureole. Not very tall, gravely benign, during his latter years of a smoothly piriform shape, wearing a neat silver-grey beard which he often tugged at with an air of reflective solemnity – whether he was discussing Greek coins or contemplating some modern Atalanta who passed him as he strolled along the Cam – he would have been a welcome guest in the Garden of Epicurus, though he might have run into stiff opposition had he entered the Grove of Academe. A purely ‘platonic’ philosophy of life was never one that he would have found congenial.

His origins and upbringing, I imagine, had helped to make him what he was. Born in 1886, of an English-Bavarian father and a Presbyterian Scottish mother, he spent most of his youth in Southern Italy, and had played as a child among the ruins of Pompeii and Herculaneum. Throughout his life he retained his passion for travel; besides joining various archaeological expeditions that took him to distant parts of Greece, he lived and worked before the Second World War in the United States and France, only leaving Paris, where he had been Lecturer at the Collège de France and Acting Professor at the University of Paris, when the German armies were on the point of entering the city. But Cambridge was his home from 1940; and during the year 1940–41 he held the onerous office of Senior Proctor, a post, I am told, that he did not greatly enjoy since he was too young in spirit himself to become an entirely wholehearted exponent of the academic statute book.

Meanwhile he continued to produce a steady stream of publications. *Greek Coins*, which appeared in 1933, established him as the chief authority on the coinage of the Hellenic world; and it had been preceded, in 1921, by *The Temple Coins of Olympia* and, in 1924, by *Athens: Its History and Coinage*. Later works included his

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Approach to Greek Art and a fascinating popular study of *The Twelve Olympians*. At the same time he published numerous articles, of which a representative selection has been assembled in the present volume. They show Charles Seltman at his best – scholarly yet discursive and sympathetic, an historian who never forgets that history is concerned with human beings, and that the thoughts and feelings of mankind vary surprisingly little from age to age. His scholarship is solid; but his touch is light; and, although each essay is a storehouse of information, the essayist's personal character has left an imprint on almost every sentence. Books published after a writer's death often make somewhat gloomy reading; but there is no suggestion in these pages of disillusionment or diminished energy. By the time he composed his last article, he had begun to feel the effects of illness; but pain and infirmity did nothing to overcloud an exceptionally candid, generous and hopeful nature.

PETER QUENNELL

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A map of the ancient Greek world appears overleaf

THE ANCIENT GREEK WORLD

Scale in Miles
0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100



A MINE OF STATUES

ARCHAEOLOGY is the discovery, recording, study and interpretation of material evidence surviving from the past of mankind. It therefore partakes both of scholarship and of science and is the natural union of two 'Arts' which never should have been imagined as separate or in opposition, since it were true to say that scholarship should be science and science, scholarship.

Yet archaeology was begotten of Greed and conceived in Pride of Possession; it was born in a royal Court; sycophants were its nurses and hangers-on its servitors. But among the strange group of human beings who set all this on foot, and whose antics and intrigues can still provide some pleasing entertainment, there was one good man, one scholar-scientist... a Swiss engineer. Though he has been almost forgotten, his memory should be for a blessing. Where others had hunted for antiquities like hogs digging for truffles, he measured, planned, recorded, kept a diary of the work in progress. For that reason this obscure man, Carl Weber, must be honoured as the first real archaeologist.

It all happened against the romantic background of the eighteenth-century Kingdom of the Two Sicilies and on the shores of the Bay of Naples. During the War of the Spanish Succession an Austrian army, profiting by victorious actions performed elsewhere by Marlborough and by Prince Eugene, advanced through Italy annexing various Spanish possessions. In July 1707, just as an Austrian viceroy was being installed in Naples, there came to that city a certain Emanuel Maurice de Lorraine Prince d'Elboeuf, who, being a distant cousin of Prince Eugene himself, held a command in the Austrian army and was now posted to the city which

attracted him. He threw himself into the social life of the Neapolitan aristocracy, amongst whom he was known as the *Duca di Belbofi*, which was the best they could do with his name; he was betrothed to a certain Princess Salsa in 1710, and spent the summer of that year in the villa of a Conte di Santi Buono at Portici by the sea immediately below the western slopes of Vesuvius.

No one at that date had any ideas about the situation of the ancient towns of Herculaneum and Pompeii which had been overwhelmed in the colossal eruption of the volcano in A.D. 79. That was something which the learned read about in books, as you read about the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah; but it had not occurred to anyone to seek to relate the happenings to a site. Now, in 1710, a farmer near Portici decided to deepen his well in order to increase his water-supply, and, digging to a depth of some sixty feet through several layers of solidified mud, he chanced suddenly upon marble fragments and bits of columns. When this came to the ears of d'Elboeuf he purchased the site and hired workmen to extend the dig in the hope of finding statuary, being presently rewarded with the discovery deep underground of some great building – not yet identifiable – and with numerous statues, the best being three fine white, marble, draped female figures. Though he built himself a villa at Portici where he might house most of his finds, he decided to make a present of these three draped figures to his cousin Prince Eugene for his palace in Vienna, since d'Elboeuf had need of the princely goodwill. Therefore, the statues were first smuggled into Rome to be repaired by some statue-faker. This was essential; for, while Prince Eugene, like many another nobleman of the time, was an ardent collector of 'the antique', it would have been an insult to present him with incomplete figures. So one marble lady was supplied with a false head, the others with some fingers and toes. From Rome the now completed statues were smuggled to Ancona, thence by sea to Trieste and finally to Vienna where they were vastly appreciated. Meanwhile, d'Elboeuf married his Neapolitan bride in 1713 and settled in his new villa at Portici to gratify his lust for more

marbles; but since duty frequently called him away, the excavations slowly petered out, he sold his villa, and no one knew as yet that there had been discovered a part of ancient Herculaneum. When Prince Eugene died in 1736, a bachelor and intestate, his heiress, a niece, sold the three marble women to Augustus III, Elector of Saxony and King of Poland, and they were transferred to Dresden where they presumably still adorn the Saxon Collection.

The d'Elboeuf episode was, as things turned out, but a prelude to greater discoveries which were to come soon after the Austrians were expelled from Naples in 1734, when the Spanish-Bourbon Line recovered possession of the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies. With the Spanish army that took Naples came Prince Charles Bourbon, eldest son of a Frenchman, King Philip V of Spain, and of an Italian Princess Farnese, now Queen Elizabeth of Spain. The young Prince was in the following year formally appointed King with the style of 'Charles III, King of the Two Sicilies and Jerusalem'. Under him and at his instigation the great discoveries were made and, in retrospect, it seems rather as though they took place upon a stage set for Light Opera or Comedy – not inappropriately, for it was King Charles III who founded in 1737 the world-famous Teatro San Carlo in Naples. And here, lest the story seem too complicated, it will be best to summarize the Characters roughly in the order of their appearance.

KING CHARLES III: very intelligent and well-informed, spoke several languages and had studied history and the sciences; a lover of music and fine art, especially sculpture, because, from his mother's side, the Royal Collection at Naples obtained much from the Farnese Collections including some of the worst monstrosities of ancient sculpture. He had a passion for hunting and for sea-fishing and loved to work with and among the ordinary long-shore fishermen. The faults of his character were a collector's greedy acquisitiveness which was matched to a secretiveness about his possessions arising from his fear that others might be the first to

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publish facts about them. Such was his nature until in 1759 he became King of Spain. How he had by that time developed will be recorded later. Physically he was well made for that age, his only blemish being a huge beak of a nose well shown in the portrait of him by Paderni.

QUEEN MARIA AMALIA CHRISTINA: married to Charles in 1738, a daughter of Augustus III, Elector of Saxony and King of Poland, the same prince who had purchased the three marble women discovered by d'Elboeuf at Portici. Since her father was a passionate collector of painting and sculpture she had grown up art-conscious and therefore with tastes exactly like Charles's, including a tendency to secretiveness about antique possessions. In contrast to him she was difficult of access, domineering, irascible and violent, and even ladies of the nobility must kneel in her presence. A competent Queen but distinctly unpleasant.

TANUCCI: a good Prime Minister, a keen antiquarian, the young King's first Counsellor, ultimately restored to favour after having been superseded for a while by -

FOGLIANI: a bad Prime Minister, scheming and venal, hated by the Queen who saw through him.

DE ALCUBIERRE: a Spaniard - and the only one in the comedy - by profession a land-surveyor, but having come to Naples with the King, was created 'Colonel i/c R.E.'s Naples'; perhaps a good land-surveyor, but without knowledge of antiquity or of mining; fortunately aware of his own limitations; probably a lazy man.

CAMILLO PADERNI: a painter, a Roman, employed principally as Keeper of the Royal Museum in the Villa at Portici, but also to repair, retouch and preserve fresco-paintings discovered in excavations. Painted the King. A lazy sychophant of a man who broke up any frescoes which seemed to him insufficiently complete.

GIUSEPPE CANART: a sculptor, a citizen of Rome whence he was imported by the King in 1739; almost a genius, certainly a most

gifted worker in marble and bronze, he produced no original creation of any moment, but took the easy way of faking antiques; unfortunately not lazy – like Paderni – and therefore a great destroyer and perverter of evidence; certainly the villain of the piece.

CARL WEBER: the hero; a Swiss engineer whose skill and efficiency were matched by his industry and common sense; he went in for the unheard-of practice of drawing ground-plans and keeping a diary of the excavation; was in charge at Herculaneum from 1750 onwards. It is difficult to find out more about Weber who suddenly appears, like Captain Bluntschli in *Arms and the Man*, a professional amongst amateurs and shams.

MONSIGNOR OTTAVIO BAYARDI: from Parma, a cousin of Fogliani, who put him forward for the lucrative appointment of scholar and expert to the excavations; he had built up for himself a purely fictitious reputation for learning, but was a screwy, muddleheaded, conceited scribbler; his excuse for playing the role of a parasite was perhaps the fact that he was small, sickly and hard up. By 1755 he at last published under pressure a bare catalogue of finds, but the fall of his cousin Fogliani in that year entailed Bayardi's dismissal, which was most fortunate.

FATHER ANTONIO PIAGGI, S.J.: one of the Officials in the Vatican Library, appointed in 1754 by the King to unroll the papyrus rolls discovered at Herculaneum; he worked exceedingly slowly and his success was very small; spiteful, a gossip and a backbiter who enjoyed blackening most of his comrades.

Such were the ten people most nearly connected with the excavations at Herculaneum.

Young King Charles had not been long at Naples before he decided to go fishing and found his way to Portici. The place, the beach and probably the local fishermen pleased him, and, looking round for a small property he found he could get the villa which had been built by d'Elboeuf some twenty-five years before. When

he went to view the house he was astonished and enchanted by some of the ancient marbles which had been left behind and instantly bought the place, determining, once he was established, to continue the excavations. In this he was presently much encouraged by his young Queen who shared his acquisitive zeal for antiquities. The first result of pursuing the sixty-foot-deep work on the same site was to produce more statues, parts of two splendid bronze horses, and – at last – an inscription proving that the building being dug was the Theatre of Herculaneum. And so it was only in 1738 that it became a certain fact – most pleasing to the King and most stirring for the learned world of Europe – that Herculaneum had been found. The site of Pompeii remained unidentified for another twenty-five years.

More statues from the Theatre, bronze and marble, from a square outside, then private houses found with frescoes which were cut from the walls and taken aloft to the bright light where they began to fade. But the King and Queen were both happy with their 'mine' for works of art; and for a while their staff was switched to ruins near Civita Vecchia in 1748, and here Carl Weber, the Swiss, took charge. Two years later the work went back to Herculaneum, where another attempted well-shaft north-west of the 'Theatre shaft' revealed the first signs of an impressive and wealthy private residence: and it was especially on this most difficult and elaborate 'dig' that the genius of Weber showed itself. The work was a kind of underground mining in which, once the requisite level of a building was reached, you made trial passages till you came to the corner of a main wall, then 'squared up' on this corner, followed the rectangular building and examined its contents: if you were Weber you made a sketch-plan with careful measurements and listed your finds; if you were not you pulled out any object you might find and then filled in again.

The impressive residence excavated by Weber proved to be the finest villa of the late Republican and early Imperial ages that has ever been discovered even to this day, and almost all the best bronzes now in the Naples Museum came from this one place: the

resting Hermes, the two wrestling boys, two satyrs, six girls in Doric dress, many bronze busts – two Greek originals among them – were found, almost in perfect preservation. Then many marbles also turned up, and presently there was made in the same villa the most sensational of all finds, a library of over six hundred manuscript papyrus rolls. Here was work for the whole of the King's staff and especially for the all too industrious Canart. He had begun his wicked ways when the Theatre was identified ten years before by making a perfect false head for the equestrian marble statue of a certain Balbus, and by breaking up four incomplete horses and building their bits together to make one complete animal. The Charioteer, and any other bronzes which seemed to Canart too troublesome to cook up, he simply melted down, making from them numerous bronze statues of Saints as well as medallions of King Charles III and his Queen. This doubtless gratified greatly the Saints in Paradise and their Majesties on Earth.

It was the discovery of the superb villa which set on foot the fullest activity at *Herculaneum*. King Charles in his raptures even forgot his beloved sea-fishing. De Alcubierre worried, Paderni painted and engraved, the Queen arranged, Canart faked, Bayardi dithered, Piaggi, he of the malicious tongue, procrastinated; only Weber acted, measured, explored, recorded. In 1735 the King founded the '*Herculaneum Academy*' which gradually took in hand a sumptuous publication of the finds, and, as the volumes slowly appeared and became more slowly known outside the Kingdom of Naples, the effect upon the learned, as well as upon the polite, world of these antiquities depicted in the volumes was immense. Already in 1756 a certain Dr Robert Watson was making reports to the Royal Society about the finds and supporting the identification of a manuscript as the work of the Epicurean philosopher Philodemus. By 1773 an English edition, not only abbreviated but, much to King Charles III's indignation, pirated by two Cambridge scholars appeared. It contained a summary of Bayardi's wordy catalogue, and engravings of numerous fresco-paintings, some copied by a Cambridge draughtsman named

Lamborn from Paderni's engravings. They are not good, but are interesting as showing how the precision-loving eighteenth-century eye desired to see good first-century Greek impressionistic painting. But the Cambridge volume by Martyn and Lettice, two Fellows of Sidney Sussex College, was very popular, being subscribed for by members of the nobility and gentry, and of the Bench of Bishops, and by Heads of Houses, Fellows and College Libraries.

For Charles III an end came to happiness in 1759. His half-brother, Ferdinand VI of Spain, died, and Charles was called upon to wear the Spanish Crown, leaving the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies to his eight-year-old, backward son under the regency of the excellent Tanucci. The King must leave the Royal Villa at Portici for the Escorial. No more of the songs of Neapolitan fishermen who were his real friends, no more nets and lines, no smell of tarry boats and of the salt sunny sea, but only the long halls and chilled galleries of an inland palace heavy with memories of piety, cruelty and pain. The King went, for that was his duty; but he took nothing with him from all his wonderful collection. Even an ancient gold ring which he had found among a hoard of gold coins on one of his countless visits to Civita Vecchia and which he had worn ever after on his hand and shown it with pride – even this he took off and left in the State Collection. Perhaps it would have hurt too much to look at it in Madrid. His Majesty had begun to collect in a spirit of greed, but time had changed and mellowed him, for there was much good in him. The spirit of the ancient world began to affect him strongly, and even to incline him to a movement away from his own medievalist and royalist traditions. Martin Hume, the historian, pointed out that he went to Spain with 'ministers and friends belonging to the new "philosophical" French School, who looked upon religion as a relic of the dark ages, and exalted the secular power of the monarchy in order to oppose the priest'. Looking back upon his happy Neapolitan days he would reflect that a little roguery within the framework of a civilized society was preferable to gangsterism in a

cloak-and-dagger culture. The Madrileños, with their long black cloaks, wide hats, daggers and oily side-whiskers, seemed far from picturesque to King Charles, who had come from a Court which he had made one of the most civilized in all Europe.

He died, aged seventy-three, in December 1788, and Hume has written of him as 'the only good, great and patriotic King that providence had vouchsafed to Spain in modern times. Enlightened, generous, and just'. The enlightenment and humanism of the King were due neither to any innate virtues of a Bourbon, nor to the traditions of his royal and princely forbears, but to contact with the freedom of the ancient world renascent through Herculaneum.

An archaeologist of today is able to assess the value and interest of Weber's work in the great villa beside Herculaneum only because the Swiss engineer left behind a rough plan with measurements, records of where works of art and manuscripts were found, and a diary of the excavation. Weber's discoveries, indeed, were much more important than he knew. The statues, of course, suffered restoration at the hands of Canart in accordance with the prevailing fashion. His worst misdeed was to scrape the patina off all bronzes leaving them the dull dark brown colour which they still display. He had a dislike of the hollow eye-socket and therefore – except where ancient enamelled eyes had been preserved – he inserted false, dead-fishy, bronze eye-balls. Many of his smaller repairs have escaped notice to the present day; but one of his larger and more misleading forgeries needs to be exposed. In the first century B.C., and probably later, there was a vogue among wealthy Roman collectors for statues of *kanephoroi* – that is of Greek girl basket-bearers – carrying baskets made probably of gilt bronze wire, such figures having been frequently dedicated by the girls' parents in sanctuaries like the Athenian Acropolis. The owner of the Herculaneum Villa possessed six such life-size statues which were bronze copies of well-known Greek originals; but one of them, on being excavated by Weber, was found to be without

head, neck, throat and right arm; and, if Canart was only too eager to use up other bronze fragments in order to supply what was missing, he was merely conforming to the wishes of the Royal Collectors. Since all the other five fifth-century bronze girls were markedly individual, he decided to make his fake different too, and copied her face and the general effect of her *coiffure* from a life-size third-century female bust (nowadays known as 'Sappho') which Weber had likewise discovered in the same Villa. A mere stylistic difference of two centuries was to Canart immaterial; yet having got into his head the notion that these bronzes represented 'dancers', he made for the girl a forged arm and hand, so placed as to suggest that she was executing a leisurely pirouette. Thus, by means of a forgery long-ignored, all the girls came to be called *danzatrici*, and not a few modern producers of Greek dramas have allowed their ideas of choreographic effects to be influenced by a misconception due to a forgery by Canart – how appropriate his name!

And all of this is by the way; because in our day it has been possible to establish beyond all doubt that Weber's Villa and its statues – scraped and part-faked by Canart – were the property of Lucius Calpurnius Piso Caesoninus, Consul in 58 B.C., and father-in-law of Julius Caesar. The library, consisting of hundreds of papyri belonged to his 'house-philosopher', Philodemus, who was leader of all the Epicureans in his day and who lived in the Villa and taught in its spacious gardens because Calpurnius Piso favoured that philosophy. Piso himself, whom Cicero attacked with unbalanced fury, was one of those men of genius and tireless energy whom the Republic produced at the very period in its history when it was destined to merge into the Roman Empire. At his death the Villa passed to his son, a man of different calibre, though of equal eminence.

Yet it is due to Weber's natural precision and carefulness that this knowledge of an important corner of the ancient world is ours, and if ever a history of field-archaeology is written, his name must be mentioned even before those of the famous nine-

teenth-century pioneers like Sir Henry Layard, Mariette, Schliemann, Petrie, Dörpfeld and Sir Arthur Evans. Not only did Weber begin almost a century before Layard started, but he had a task more difficult than the one that faced Schliemann, when in 1870 he began to cut into the hill of Hissarlik and gradually discovered stratum on stratum, proving the existence of numerous past cities of Troy. It is often supposed that in A.D. 79 the town of Herculaneum was overwhelmed by molten lava from Vesuvius. Had that been so every bronze statue would have become a formless metal mass, every marble a lump of burnt lime, and every manuscript a little heap of ashes. What happened was that streams of boiling mud flowed down the mountain, and this horrid substance seeped into every nook and cranny. But it was in its way an excellent preservative, since as it cooled it set fairly hard. For centuries between A.D. 79 and the huge eruption of 1631, Vesuvius deposited a series of mud-layers on Herculaneum, and it was into these that farmers dug in search of water, and it was through the lowest of these layers that Weber drove his big subterranean galleries to find the ground-plan of the great Villa built by Lucius Calpurnius Piso. Within the present century the Italian authorities have excavated several other sections of Greek Herculaneum and, at great cost, have removed layer after layer of the solidified mud which overlies the town. Even had he desired it King Charles III of the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies could not have afforded what was possible to Benito Mussolini. Today, however, one may observe, side by side, the modern excavations and one of the wide entrances into Weber's galleries and may perceive, over the adit, stratified layers of solid mud – each one the token of a volcanic upheaval – mud which increases the fertility of the Vesuvian earth, while it embarrasses the excavator.

The Regent Tanucci's confidence in Weber was such that, when in 1763 certain ruins near Civita Vecchia were identified by an inscription at the city of Pompeii, the Regent put him in sole charge because he had proposed a new and methodical plan of excavation. Diggers were no longer to plunge haphazard into the

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ground, but the scheme was to move steadily forward by streets and blocks; and houses, instead of being filled in after looting ended, were to be left open to view. But that year was one of misfortunes for Naples which suffered from a famine; and some disease, hurtful to the undernourished, struck Weber down. He had worked for about fifteen years at the excavations and was presumably still fairly young when he died. The fruits of his skill and industry have endured.

PEISISTRATUS OF ATHENS

SALAMIS is a name famous in the world's history, recalling as it does the great sea-fight in the straits between the island and Attica, where, in 480 B.C., the combined navies of the free Greek States destroyed the huge Persian fleet. The Greeks and Romans understood quite as well as we do that that battle changed the course of history and saved Europe from becoming an appendage of the Orient. Yet before 480 B.C., there had been another and earlier battle of Salamis, which seemed to every Athenian in the sixth century B.C. a memorable event, because it was this earlier battle that enabled Athens to become a great power once again among Hellenic States.

Salamis is an island of strange shape which can well be appreciated today by anyone who has the good fortune to fly to Athens. It is normal for the plane to follow the Corinthian Gulf, and having flown directly over the Corinth Canal, to turn due east and pass over the southernmost corner of Salamis before touching down at the Athenian airport near Cape Colias. The island, seen from the air, looks rather like a pair of ragged shorts blowing on a clothes-line with the legs in a westerly direction. It should, in fact, have been two islands, since it is almost cut in half by a deep bay, and if it had been two, the northernmost would have belonged to Athens and the southernmost to Megara, but since it forms a single unit, it became an inevitable cause of dispute.

Much of the history of Athens in the first half of the sixth century B.C. remains vague and difficult of comprehension, but one fact comes out clearly. Peisistratus, a young and brilliant soldier, member of an aristocratic Athenian family, led an expedition about 570 B.C. and recaptured for Athens the whole island of Salamis, which had been Athenian territory long before.

It is only recently that, as the result of truly important archaeological and epigraphical discoveries, historians have been able to perceive the remote beginnings of ancient Greek civilization; for the evidence that Mycenaeans of the bronze age were Greeks, because they spoke and wrote Greek, provides an entirely new outlook within the historical framework. The Mycenaean civilization was in every sense a Greek civilization, and the relationship of sixth- and fifth-century classical Greece to the Mycenaean and Homeric ages was similar to the relationship of the Italian and West European Renaissance to the classical Graeco-Roman age. During the Mycenaean age, and for long after, it may fairly be assumed that the island of Salamis formed part of the Athenian kingdom, and that Athens held what may be called a small maritime empire in the seas adjoining her coasts. This little realm continued to be of importance from the tenth down to the eighth century B.C., and there is evidence to show that a kind of pottery known as 'proto-geometric' was being made by Athenian potters domiciled far away at Orchomenos in Boeotia. Yet from an Athenian point of view, disaster came in the seventh century because, probably about 665 B.C., various States lying to the south of Athens combined with Pheidon, King of Argos, and the merchant princes of Aegina, to overthrow the Athenian maritime power. If the State of Megara, near neighbour to Athens, profited by this attack, it is easy to understand why the Megarians gained possession of the island of Salamis, which lies quite as close to their territory as it does to that of the Athenians. Accordingly, it is fair to assume that the island remained Megarian from about 665 down to about 570 B.C. Pheidon, King of Argos, was a very successful autocrat who, it seems, obtained control of an ancient maritime confederacy known as the Amphictiony of Calauria. An Amphictiony was, on a very small scale, a 'union of nations', the word meaning the 'dwellers around' a central focus. Within the frame of Greek history, the most celebrated of these unions was the Delphic Amphictiony, but the Calaurian was probably much older, and its religious centre was the Sanctuary of Poseidon on Poros, one of

the most delightful of the many magical islands in the Aegean Sea. Poros was separated only by a narrow strait from Troezen on the mainland, and Troezen was closely linked to Athens for centuries, worshipping – like Athens – Athene and Poseidon as its principal deities. Troezen administered Poseidon's sanctuary, and the 'member states' of the 'union' were Prasiae, Nauplia and Hermione – all Argive, and therefore under Pheidon's control – Athens, Orchomenos and Troezen, the latter group being ranged against the Argive cities, and the balance held by the seventh member, Aegina, a relatively large and independent island. About 645 B.C., Pheidon deprived Troezen of its seat in the union, substituting Argive Epidauros as a new member. Aegina opted for the party that had the greater power and, in the ensuing naval battle, Athens was heavily defeated, lost her sea-power, and with it the island of Salamis. Any man whose efforts could restore this desirable island to its Athenian parentage was bound to become a hero; and Peisistratus was the man.

It was probably in his early thirties that he held the office of Polemarch or War-Archon and, encouraged by his kinsman Solon, related on his mother's side, invented a successful stratagem recounted by Plutarch from some earlier source. Though Solon is said to have been in nominal charge of the expedition, it appears likely that Peisistratus was the strategist and tactician who obtained the victory:

The popular account of Solon's campaign is as follows: Having sailed to Cape Colias with Peisistratus, he found all the women of the city there, performing the customary sacrifice to Demeter. He therefore sent a trusty man to Salamis, who pretended to be a deserter, and bade the Megarians, if they wished to capture the principal women of Athens, to sail to Colias with him as fast as they could. The Megarians were persuaded by him, and sent off some men in his ship. But when Solon saw the vessel sailing back from the island, he ordered the women to withdraw, and directed those of the younger men who were still beardless, arraying themselves in the garments, head-bands,

and sandals which the women had worn, and carrying concealed daggers, to sport and dance on the sea shore until the enemy had disembarked and the vessel was in their power. This being done as he directed, the Megarians were lured on by what they saw, beached their vessel, and leapt out to attack women as they supposed, vying with one another in speed. The result was that not a man of them escaped, but all were slain, and the Athenians at once set sail and took possession of the island.

In this rather confused little story one may perceive propaganda in operation. Peisistratus was later to be classed as a 'tyrant' and remained for Greek historians and orators a rather special tyrant, because he was a successful, moderate, genial and constitutional despot; for these reasons his greatest rivals – the aristocrats of the clan of Alcmaeon – consistently promoted the blackening of his memory. Therefore his first great achievement had to be minimized, and this was best done by attributing the successful operations to the leadership of another; the sober and cautious Solon. When a different story about the capture of Salamis is considered, the first story becomes a transparent case of wilful transference of merit. Briefly, the other story is that of a brilliant raid. Peisistratus, accompanied by a small, well-trained force of shock troops, landed at the base of a cliff called Sciradion, above which the people of Salamis had built temples of Athena and of Ares. The landing party, led by Peisistratus himself, climbed up the cliff-face, thought to be unscalable and therefore unguarded. By this means, Peisistratus won the first historic battle of Salamis and obtained possession of the chief city and therefore of the whole island of Salamis.

On the face of it, either story might be equally true or untrue, but there is indirect evidence of an archaeological and pictorial type which overwhelmingly supports the second account of the capture of Salamis. Some time after the campaign, probably during the reign of Peisistratus himself, the Athenians showed their perception of the decisive nature of this event in a characteristic manner; they instituted a *dromenon*, or annual ceremony of a semi-

religious type, in which they re-enacted the stratagem by which the island was captured. An Athenian ship would approach the island in silence at first, and then those on board would make an onset with shouts and cries, and *one man in armour* would leap out with a shout of triumph and run to the cliff of Sciradion. Now there exists a drinking-cup made by the potter Hieron and painted by the Telephos painter, who flourished about 490 B.C., which depicts this same commemorative ceremony. We see the procession of Athenians running forward with gesticulations and shouts, their festal attire and the burning altar alike denoting the solemnity of the act, and at their head the *one man in armour* who has already reached the cliff Sciradion and begins to mount it. But there is one point which may have a significance hitherto overlooked. The single armed man bears a shield on which the blazon is the forepart of a horse.

Heraldic emblems were much in vogue among the Greeks; and careful scholarship, picking up hints and allusions from a variety of sources, has made it possible to assign blazons to several of the sixth-century Athenian families and individuals. A special shape of collared oil-amphora, which figures, surrounded by the circle of a shield, on Athenian silver coins minted while Solon was Archon – 594 to 590 B.C. – may well have been the badge of Solon himself, since he was personally interested in the oil trade, and legislated to protect olive-growing. On his departure, the head of the famous Alcmaeonid clan gained control, and the family coat-of-arms, a *triskeles*, or three revolving legs on a shield, promptly occupied the coinage. Later, another aristocratic clan, named the Etobutads, produced a member who held office in the Treasury or Mint, and the clan's coat-of-arms, a facing bull's head, appeared on the silver. It was an appropriate type because the clan claimed descent from an ancestor called Boutes, the first man ever to harness ox to plough. The wealthiest of all the families, however, was the one that seems to have controlled large interests in the Attic mining region around Laurium, whence a great quantity of silver was obtained, and it was to this family that Peisistratus belonged. Its

ancestral claims were both exalted and horsey. In Homer, Nestor is the famous old man, wise despite his garrulity, who is son of Neleus, and grandson of Poseidon, god of horses because he was himself once a horse. Nestor's son in the *Odyssey* is the first Peisistratus. Long ago the family changed its domicile from western Peloponnesus to Attica, but its members favoured horsey names. The father of Peisistratus was named Hippocrates and he named his eldest and second sons Hippias and Hipparchus. The horse, or the forepart of a horse, is therefore a perfect 'canting type' for an ancient family with all these hippic names. That is the reason for assuming that the armed figure depicted on the drinking-cup already described is intended to be Peisistratus himself.

At least fifteen other blazons exist on Athenian coins minted before Peisistratus found himself in control of the State, but they cannot, with our present knowledge, be assigned to individuals or families. Nevertheless, those four which can be assigned are significant and interesting, especially as they all appear as shield-signs on Athenian black-figure vase-paintings of the sixth century B.C. An interest in significant emblems still exists among Greeks of the present century. When elections were pending in October 1926, the following paragraph appeared in *The Times*, sent by a Special Correspondent in Athens:

How far amid all this welter of rival factions will the average Greek elector justify the old definition of man as a 'political being'? The party emblems will no doubt aid him to a great extent in the mere act of recording his vote. Thus, for example, the common emblem of M. Kaphandaris and M. Michalakopoulos is a star surrounded by the words 'Liberal Parties'. The emblem of M. Tsaldaris is a laurel branch; that of M. Zavitsianos an oak-tree branch; that of General Metaxas an ear of wheat. The Agrarians have taken the plough as their symbol; the Jewish Minority Party a swallow, and Dr Sfatianakis a loaf.

Ancient interest in escutcheons is no more evidence for popular illiteracy seeking refuge in symbolism than it is among the Greek race of today which continues to produce far more literate

and intelligent persons than does any other South-European group.

Four years after his great achievement, the hero of Salamis found himself the ruler of his country. In 566 B.C. he was not Archon; but a personal friend, named Hippocleides, was; a man not on the best of terms with the Alcmaeonids and their leader, Megacles – dangerous rivals of Peisistratus and his clan. Hippocleides, son of Tisander, excelled all other Athenians at that time in wealth and in good looks, so it was affirmed by Herodotus, who relates a pleasing story about the wooers of a certain Agariste, daughter of Cleisthenes, Despot of Sicyon. That powerful and genial ruler having resolved to betroth the girl to the best of the Greeks, thirteen young gentlemen of parts turned up and were hospitably housed and carefully observed for a year, at the end of which time Cleisthenes had decided in favour of Hippocleides. The tale in the Sixth Book of Herodotus continues as follows:

But when the day came which had been fixed for the betrothal and the declaration by Cleisthenes himself of whom he chose out of them all, Cleisthenes slew an hundred oxen and made a feast for the wooers themselves and for all the men of Sicyon. And when the dinner was over, the wooers contended in music and social talk. And as the drinking went on, Hippocleides, who much outdid the others, bade the piper pipe him a tune; and when the piper did so, he danced. And haply he was pleased with his own dancing but Cleisthenes, who looked on, was disquieted with the whole matter. Then after a while Hippocleides asked for a table to be brought in; and when the table was brought he firstly danced Laconian dances thereon, and then again Attic dances, and thirdly he rested his head on the table and beat the air with his legs. Now Cleisthenes, the first time that he danced and the second also, although he abhorred the thought of Hippocleides being his son-in-law, because of his dancing and his immodesty, nevertheless restrained himself, not wishing to break forth against him. Howbeit, when he saw him beat the air with his legs, he was not able to restrain himself any longer, but said: 'Son of Tisander, thou hast lost

this marriage by thy dancing.' And Hippocleides answered and said: 'Hippocleides couldn't care less.' And thence this is become a proverb.

Meanwhile, it was Megacles, son of Alcmaeon, who won the girl's hand, which helped to account for a latent hostility between the two noblemen, and explained why Hippocleides favoured the rival party headed by Peisistratus.

Perhaps the Archon alone could have called a stop to the progress of Peisistratus, but the Archon was his friend in 566 B.C. when he took the next great step in his career by founding and promoting a panhellenic festival, on the highest level, known thenceforth as 'the Greater Panathenaia'. Though this fact was ignored by some later writers with an unfriendly bias, it was definitely stated by Aristotle (Fragment 637; V. Rose) that 'Peisistratus founded the great Panathenaia'. The festival was in celebration of Athene's birthday on the 28th of the month Hekatombaion (July-August), and had been for a long while a small annual event. But Peisistratus made every fourth year a great year, when far more pomp was displayed and when contests, both athletic and musical, took place. By thus making it quadrennial, he put the Greater Panathenaia into the same class as the great international panhellenic Games held at Olympia, Delphi, Nemea and the Isthmus; for Greeks of any State were welcomed as competitors. Marble statues were frequently dedicated to Athene and set up near her temple even before the great festival was founded, and one of the earliest of these on the Acropolis is generally dated to about 575 B.C. It was the gift of a certain Rhombos and represents himself carrying a sacrificial calf, the little creature's head tilted engagingly towards the man's.

A famous narrative representation of the procession is found on the frieze of the Parthenon, and although this belongs to the fifth century B.C., the main part of the processional structure must already have been devised by Peisistratus himself. The priest and priestess of Athene, the Archons, the marshals, girls of the aristocratic families carrying sacred implements, youths in charge of the

animals for sacrifice, resident aliens, all took part. The procession, which started at the Dipylon Gate and wound itself through the Agora up to the Acropolis, included the competitors who were to take part in the subsequent athletic contests, and was brought up in the rear by the Athenian cavalry. A robe woven by Athenian girls was taken to the goddess, hoisted upon the mast of a small model ship set on wheels. After the day of the procession, the athletic contests began, and the prizes given were the famous panathenaic amphorae, one of the very oldest of which is preserved in the British Museum. It bears the words, 'I am from the Games in Athens', and has painted upon it a picture of Athene armed with helmet, shield and spear, striding forward as a goddess of battle. This great occasion seems to have been marked by the issue in 566 B.C. of an entirely new type of coinage, having on the obverse a head of the goddess Athene helmeted as shown upon the prize vases, and on the reverse the owl, sacred to Athene herself, accompanied by an inscription reading A T H É as well as a little olive-twig. Even this last detail had its symbolism, for the prize vases which were given to the victors contained sacred olive oil. These coins seem to have been the first in the history of the world to have types upon both sides and to bear several letters of a city's name. They were made of very pure silver, derived from the mines in East Attica, and were more than twice the weight of the old, primitive coins which they gradually superseded.

Such evidence as is ours leads us to suppose that the first of these festivals was a sensational success, the credit for which was rightly given to its promoter. The second festival was celebrated in 562 B.C., and it is likely that the political opponents of Peisistratus looked forward to the event with apprehension and were greatly perturbed, both by the international fame and by the local national enthusiasm, productive of esteem and affection, which Peisistratus now enjoyed in all Attica. The nobles of the Alcmaeonid clan and all their allies saw clearly that Peisistratus, with his numerous noble, bourgeois and proletarian adherents, was destined for a constitutional despotism strongly supported by

the people. Megacles, son of Alcmaeon – and husband of that Agariste who was the daughter of Cleisthenes, despot of Sicyon – determined to act; for Megacles, having for a whole year observed his father-in-law-to-be, knew how despots obtained, retained, and used their power. Indeed, the situation must have appeared to Megacles rather desperate after the disturbing success in 562 B.C. of the second Greater Panathenaic Festival, and the only possible solution seemed to be the elimination of Peisistratus. People like the Alcmaeonids did not habitually practise murder, but they were not squeamish about it if they could deceive themselves into thinking that it amounted to justifiable homicide. Thugs hired for the job set upon Peisistratus as he was seated in his trotting-car drawn by a pair of mules, coming from one of his country estates into the city. Little narrow mule-cars appear on early Greek coins of Rhegium and Messana, and owed their success all over Greece to the fact that a narrow wheel-base and light structure made them usable on mere country tracks in a land devoid of roads. Moreover, they were fast, which may explain why Peisistratus escaped with a flesh-wound or two, while his animals were also hurt, but not too badly, since he was able to drive them into Athens. Such a situation was truly, even delightfully, dramatic, and the victor of Salamis, the creator of the Panathenaic Procession, revelled in real-life drama. The people were shocked, and a close friend and neighbour named Aristion proposed to the Assembly that their benefactor be allowed a police bodyguard of several men since his life was clearly endangered. The motion was adopted and passed with enthusiasm. This occurred in 561 B.C. and from then on Peisistratus, protected by a bodyguard, was formally classed as 'a tyrant'. The would-be assassins escaped detection, and the Alcmaeonid clan put about the unlikely story that the 'tyrant' had wounded himself and his mules in order to obtain a bodyguard and the power it gave.

The word *tyrannos* in Greek had not the same connotation as our derived word tyrant. The Greeks themselves borrowed the word either from the Phrygians or the Lydians, who probably used it

simply to denote king. For the Greek, however, it did mean an absolute ruler unlimited by custom or constitution; yet it was not opprobrious since it was applied as a suitable title to various gods, among them Zeus, Apollo, Ares and Eros. In later practice, the word was often interchangeable with *Basileus*, or king, but it may generally be assumed to mean one who reigns other than by ancestral descent. It was only when Athens became a fully-fledged democracy that the word became very nearly a term of abuse.

The possession by Peisistratus of a marked sense of the dramatic has already been observed, and it was partly this which enabled him to see the great propaganda value in the cult of Athene, who was for Greeks goddess of the palace, the fortress, and the fortified city. That is why she was worshipped at Sparta and Corinth, Argos and Thebes, as well as in many lesser City States. Some think that she gave her name to – others that she derived it from – her greatest city; and her cult, her dominion over men's minds and their deep affection for her were far stronger in her own Athens than in any other Greek State. She had absolute supremacy in the thoughts and hearts of the people of Athens, and this, it seems, was due primarily to one man, for the title 'Apostle of Athene' is one which could well have been applied to Peisistratus. Of the two channels by means of which he advertised his goddess, and used her at the same time as propaganda, the coinage was the more important. One is apt to forget that before the invention of printing at the beginning of the Renaissance, there was only one possible means for the propagation of ideas, because the only 'printed' objects were coins, automatically distributed in their myriads by trade among the people who mattered. These were the very people whom a ruler or a state wished to impress. Within recent years the tremendous importance of Roman coinage, both Republican and Imperial, as machinery for propaganda has been studied and clarified. But if we are to pick the one man who, first in history, realized the use to which a propaganda coinage could be put, we cannot fail to observe that that man was Peisistratus.

Though the attempt to assassinate the despot had failed his

opponents continued to work against him. With his usual sense of the dramatic he, who rested his power on the approval of the merchants and the goodwill of the workers, apparently decided to leave Athens for a short period so that his own supporters might see how they got on when left to the mercy of the rival noble houses of Attica. Accordingly, in 560 B.C., he and his family suddenly and unexpectedly left the city, and retired to his country estates in the east of Attica.

Not many autocrats have ventured on the risky policy of creating a void in the body politic by the simple method of withdrawal. Yet that is precisely what Peisistratus did, leaving the city wide open to the machinations of his opponents. The leaders of these were Megacles, son of Alcmaeon, and Lycurgus. Megacles claimed the allegiance of the 'men of the Shore', that is to say of the merchants and exporters; while Lycurgus of the Eteoboutad clan represented the richer, landed interest of the 'men of the Plain' to the north of Athens and to the west, including the Eleusinian district. But a third group had come into being, the 'men of the Hills', all Peisistratid adherents and friends. Therefore, when he decided about 560 B.C. to leave for a while the city of Athens, Peisistratus could depart with a sense of assurance, because he was able to go to the region where his most reliable backers lived; the workers in silver mines which he owned, the stable and prosperous peasants, and the sheep- and goat-farmers of the Attic hill-country, which lies beyond the Hymettus range to the east and the north-east. It was there, at Brauron near the sea, that his castle had been built. Its exact site is not known, though some fortunate archaeologist may one day discover it. The dominion of Peisistratus in Athens had been established, as has already been noted, about the year 566 B.C. when the Greater Panathenaic Festival – his own creation – came into being. He had managed to govern without disturbing any of the existing magistracies, and without alteration of the laws, but in accordance with the established institutions, until underground plotting and machinations made it ex-

pedient for him to withdraw for a short period. Herodotus states that Megacles and Lycurgus with their partisans became reconciled, and were responsible for his departure from Athens. Yet so unnatural an alliance between the mercantile and the landed interests proved to be ephemeral, and Megacles felt that his party was losing ground. Accordingly, he seems to have established communication with Peisistratus at Brauron, which, since Attica is a small land, is not too far away. I have myself covered the distance from Brauron to Athens in about five hours of steady walking.

Be that as it may. Megacles decided to try for a family alliance and arranged to become the tyrant's father-in-law. In any case, there was no legal objection to such an arrangement, even though Peisistratus had already contracted a marriage which had produced two sons, now grown-up, and a daughter. His wife was named Timonassa, an Argive of distinguished family, but even so there appears to have been nothing in Athenian law and custom to prevent him from acquiring a second wife, and he could therefore agree to marry the daughter of Megacles. Meanwhile, a dramatic return to Athens had to be organized. Half-way between Brauron and Mount Hymettus there was the *deme*, or commune, Pacania – now represented by the modern village of Liopesi – where a local squire named Socrates had a daughter, Phyé, tall and fair-haired, who consented to be attired as the goddess Athene with helmet and shield, and to drive the chariot of Peisistratus back to Athens, preceded by heralds who announced that the goddess herself was bringing back the king-to-be. Herodotus, writing a century later, casts doubts upon this tale, believing that the Athenians would not have been so easily deceived, despite the fact that crowds can often enjoy almost any pageant-like form of deception. The truth of the story appears to gain support from a bas-relief discovered in the early 1920's embedded in part of a wall at Athens. It dates from the time of Hippias, son of Peisistratus, and may depict this very episode. The personage acting as charioteer wears a helmet and has a shield slung on the back. Just as the horses are about to start, an elegant, bearded warrior, wearing a magnificently crested helmet,

steps up on to the chariot. Behind him march two other figures, well-caparisoned, 'who might indeed represent Hippias and Hipparchos, the two older sons of the despot. Imagination may conjure up the scene, for they are expected, and all has been arranged beforehand. Somehow the Peisistratid *cortège* and its new Alcmaeonid allies met at the eastern gate of the Athenian walls and the procession, led by the heralds, moved up to the Acropolis. Athene had brought the 'new Erechtheus', the new King of Athens, back to the building which Homer called his 'strong-house'.

The Athenian people, who had for months been troubled by rival gangs, fighting like hirelings of Montagu and Capulet, must have been full of gratitude at this return, and the truncheons of Peisistratus' police may have seemed a welcome sight in Athens. Some building on the Acropolis, probably eliminated in the fifth century when the Propylaea were erected, was converted to act as a small, simple residence for Peisistratus and his family. At that corner of the rock, there already existed a communication with the famous spring in a cave sacred to a primitive water-sprite called Empedo. Potsherds show that the use of this underground spring, which was of the utmost value to the fortress, goes back as far as neolithic times. At some period in the sixth century B.C., it was re-named Klepsydra, or 'secret water', and it was tapped and drawn off into a neat and compact well-house. Peisistratus, however, was not one to concentrate on producing a good water supply for his own residence and fortress while neglecting the water supply of the Athenian people. Even now, those who visit Greece in summer recognize that in that country water is the first requisite of all. Peisistratus constructed at least one, possibly two public well-houses, each of which received the name of Enneakrounos, or 'Nine-Spouts', one on the hill called Pnyx to the west of the Acropolis, and the other in the Agora, or market, to the north of the rock. A well-known sixth-century Athenian vase in the British Museum provides a picture of one of these, and shows five of the spouts with water running from them. Two

spouts are surmounted by youths on horseback, while the other three issue from the mouths of lions. Four girls are filling their water-vessels, and gossip in the meantime. Presumably the other four spouts were thought of as round the other side of the well-house, or, for that matter, the other side of the vase.

At some time after his effective assumption of control, which seems to have occurred as early as 566 B.C., Peisistratus began a building programme on the Acropolis itself. An old temple, known from its length as the 'hundred-footer', already existed on the very site upon which the Periclean Parthenon was later to rise. Some yards north of this were the ruins of a Mycenaean palace where, so tradition said, the Homeric Erechtheus, King of Athens, had lived. Over these ruins Peisistratus now built a simple Doric temple, a surviving gable structure of which shows Herakles wrestling with the 'Old Man of the Sea', while a three-bodied giant is in position to take on the winner. Meanwhile, a simple ceremonial had to operate when Peisistratus, keeping his promise, married the daughter of Megacles and Agariste. A later, perhaps romantic, story alleged that Phylé, the girl from Paeania who dressed up as Athene, was married to Hipparchos, the second son of the despot. The wife of the elder son, Hippias, appears to have been named Myrrhina, and she bore him several children, the oldest male having his grandfather's name, Peisistratus.

The third Festival of the Greater Panathenaia was due in 558 B.C. and the fortunes of the 'tyrant', now more suitably called the king of Athens, were very much in the ascendant. If the first and second Festivals had been so successful as to spread the fame of the city and its new king throughout Greece, it was to be expected that the third Festival would be even more brilliant. Presumably success followed, and the reputation of Athens increased.

Family trouble was, however, on the way for Peisistratus. He had married a girl of the Alcmaeonid clan, a daughter of Megacles, and for some reason which cannot be clearly divined, he decided not to have children by her. It is not clear whether he refused to consummate the marriage because the girl failed to attract him, or

because he feared to beget a child which might come under the curse pronounced upon the Alcmaeonids. His wife's grandfather and other members of the clan had been guilty of sacrilege, for which reason they had been exiled from Athens until about 590 B.C., when they were 'purified' by Delphian Apollo and enabled to return to their home. None the less, the stigma remained, and superstition in the service of policy was frequently invoked to the detriment of members of the family. After three or four years of married life, the young 'queen' of Athens appealed to her parents, and in the Athenian social order of those days it was clear that an insult had been offered by Peisistratus to the House of Alcmaeon so grave that the powerful noblemen decided to change sides once more, to conspire against the king, and to bring about his expulsion.

Megacles, therefore, joined forces with the leaders of his former opponents, and in 556 B.C. the situation became so perilous that Peisistratus retired voluntarily, leaving Attica altogether, and relinquishing even his rich silver mines to the nobles who once more governed Athens.

The fortunes of Peisistratus, after the final estrangement between himself and Megacles had taken place and he had retired from Attica, were full of diversity and adventure. The more study is devoted to the character of the man as mirrored in his actions, the more one perceives that he was probably the greatest statesman whom Athens ever produced; assuredly greater than Pericles. He has been compared with Augustus, but Augustus, like Alexander the Great, built upon foundations laid by a brilliant predecessor. Peisistratus not only laid the foundations but built the city also, and to him more than to any other Athens owed her greatness and power.

It is characteristic of the man's far-sightedness that when the odds were for a time overwhelming he should withdraw from the country and bide his time, rather than risk all on a single throw. With his family and a body of followers he left the city in 556 B.C. and, after visiting Eretria, sailed for the Gulf of Therma - now

called the Gulf of Salonica. Here, at Rhaecelus, he settled for a brief period only and moved thence to the Pangaeon district on the borders of Macedon and Thrace, rich in mines of silver.

Conventionally, an absence of ten years from Athens before his final return has been claimed for Peisistratus. Yet the very figure of ten years arouses a critic's suspicion. The Trojan War, it was said, kept the Greeks abroad for ten years; and after it was over, Odysseus roamed the seas and islands for another ten years. Solon, when he had worked on a new constitution for the Athenians, voluntarily absented himself for ten years. Later on, after the 'tyranny' in Athens had been overthrown and the Alcmaeonid Cleisthenes, son of Megacles, had established the Democracy, he invented the political device known as ostracism, which entailed the departure of a prominent man – without the loss of citizenship or possessions – for a period of ten years. Therefore, when we are told that Peisistratus, his family and followers, were away from Athens for ten years before a final return, we are inclined to suspect the figure and to conclude that he may not have been away as long as that.

At the base which he had selected for his preparations Peisistratus could command all the raw materials for his expedition; for besides silver, there were men in plenty – Thracian mercenaries ready to serve in any adventurous campaign, such as appear in their quaint *tricot* costumes and pointed caps on many an Attic vase; and up the Strymon were forests that supplied the timber needed to construct ships and transports. Meanwhile, he proceeded to establish good relations with other ambitious men in other States, promising to set up Lygdamis as Despot of the Island of Naxos, and to work for the advancement of Polycrates in Samos. He, like some other Samian merchants and adventurers, had a liking for piracy, and when in 540 B.C. his Athenian and Naxian colleagues helped Polycrates to despotism in Samos, the fleet of privateers became a 'navy'. By that time Peisistratus was back in Athens and very powerful; yet the precise date of his return remains in doubt. If he was really absent for a decade, then it

might seem that he was newly established in the city in 546 B.C., the year in which Cyrus, King of Persia, overthrew the Lydian Empire of Croesus. But if we hold the ten years' absence to be merely conventional, we may assume that he was back well before that date. Anyhow, the manner of his return is clearly reported by the Greek historians.

When his forces were assembled in Thrace, his first step must have been to establish a base close to Attica, and he discovered it in the small but prosperous Euboean State of Eretria, where his enterprise found favour with the authorities. Argos, his wife's country, sent a contingent of a thousand men. Peisistratus promptly got into touch with his old followers in the hill country of eastern Attica, and was joined by their levies when he landed, unopposed, near Marathon. The oligarchs at Athens tried to hold the wide gap between Pentelicus and Hymettus, and battle was joined near a temple of Athene at Pallene. Probably this was no more than a mere display of arms, because the forces marshalled by the despot's opponents were only half-hearted, and even glad of his return. The hostile nobles quickly sought refuge in other States such as Boeotia and Phocis, though Peisistratus was able to intern some of the younger members of the old families in the Island of Naxos which his friend Lygdamis now controlled.

From the time of this little victory at Pallene until his death some twenty years later, Peisistratus was secure in his command of the Athenian state, and of the small 'empire' which he was able to attach to it. In Thrace, where he owned territory, he continued to maintain his foothold, for the region supplied not only silver but also timber and tough mercenaries. But east of this he was also able to control the Hellespont – or Dardanelles – where he set up a son of his named Hegesistratus as despot of the important little Asiatic Greek town of Sigeum, while he established Athenian mastery of the northern side of the straits by encouraging the migration to that region of an Athenian nobleman named Miltiades of the Philaid clan, who was ill at ease under the Peisistratid rule, though not actively hostile, like Megacles and some of the other nobles.

Attica was fast increasing in population and prosperity, while Athens itself grew steadily in size; for though the despot did all he could to encourage the farmers to remain on the land, people from other States flocked to the city of Athens, settled as resident aliens, and increased the exportable manufactures of Attica. Even by the middle of the sixth century B.C., the land could not possibly produce enough corn to support the population, and, knowing this, Peisistratus felt the urgency of obtaining control of the Hellespontine Straits, which led ultimately to the Black Sea and the richest corn-growing region of Europe. Indeed, a century before Pericles organized the corn trade from South Russia to Attica, Peisistratus was already doing the same thing.

The handsome, popular coinage of fine silver which Peisistratus had introduced soon won acceptance far afield from Attica and greatly facilitated the purchase of corn and timber and the hire of mercenary troops. Meanwhile, the very coin-types of Athene and her owl promoted a kind of political propaganda for the goddess, as protectress of her chief city and for her special protector, Peisistratus, King of Athens. The quadrennial Panathenaic Festival, with its religious procession, its competitive games, its musical contests and the prizes of gay painted vases containing rich olive oil, had a value which could be assessed in both propagandist and economic terms. Temples and smaller buildings on the Acropolis, an elaborate water-supply with well-houses for the city, have already been mentioned as part of his building programme, and many of these structures may have been put up before he left for his temporary exile in Thrace. His most ambitious building, however, was probably started after his return to the city. This was the Olympieion, or temple of Zeus Olympios, which must have been a magnificent structure, planned and begun in the Doric order, of a size intended to rival the huge Ionic temples which had recently gone up in Ionia. The greatest of them was the Temple of Artemis by Ephesus, the so-called 'Croesus Temple' to which Croesus, King of Lydia, subscribed liberally, while another great Ionic temple was that of Hera at Samos which was erected by the celebrated

Polycrates. When Peisistratus began to build the Olympieion he put it on flat ground, well to the east of the Acropolis, and not far from the Stadium where athletic contests took place. At his death it was a long way from completion, and it is not certain whether the work was carried on slowly by his sons. With the end of the despotism, nothing further was done to promote the construction of this temple until very much later, when about 176 B.C. a Seleucid prince from Syria – soon to adopt the style of king, Antiochus, God Manifest, Bearer of Victory – undertook the complete rebuilding of the temple in honour of Zeus Olympios, and as a graceful gesture to the Athenian people. Gigantic Corinthian columns, still today a conspicuous land mark in Athens, were part of this famous structure, yet Antiochus failed to finish it and it was only completed by the Roman Emperor Hadrian.

In striking contrast to this tremendous building, which is now no more than something from the ruined past, there was a small simple wooden affair of benches, put up by Peisistratus on the south slope of the Acropolis, that marked the beginning of one of the greatest benefits that mankind has obtained – the first theatre. There was an 'orchestra', a circular dancing-place, close to a small rough temple of Dionysos. A crude ancient image of the god was brought by the despot's order from Eleutheræ in north-western Attica and was placed in this little building, and a primitive type of play-acting, which had gone on in the god's village home, suddenly assumed a new importance. The original professional author-actor was Thespis, who won a prize for tragedy in 534 B.C. and was the first to appear as an actor separate from the Chorus, speaking set speeches, changing his role as he changed masks, and playing several parts within a play. Structures like tents or booths served as dressing-rooms, but it is not known what background may have been arranged behind the shallow platform or stage. From this, the first state-sponsored theatre, Attic drama and Greek drama in general continued to develop along its own impressive lines.

Parallel with this creation and development of dramatic art was

the profound interest which Peisistratus took in the epics. When Homer put together the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, they cannot have been quite the poems that we now know. Interpolations exist, and there is evidence for certain Attic forms within the poems because they were recited publicly at Athens, and because Athens was the centre of the Greek book trade. Indeed, the first written texts, as distinct from oral tradition, probably appeared in the time of, and with the support of, Peisistratus himself. He, it may be assumed, standardized the canon of the whole Homeric cycle which included those vanished epics that were concerned with the Trojan war.

During the despot's reign, the arts of sculpture and painting attained the highest degree of excellence, the sculptor whom one most admires being an unknown artist to whom we nowadays refer as The Rampin Master. His two most elegant surviving works are the Rampin Horseman, carved somewhere between 560 and 550 B.C., and the celebrated Peplos Koré, made perhaps a decade later. Athenian pottery achieved its fame in the ancient world both by the excellence of its clay and glaze and by the painting upon it. A flourishing export trade, which took vases as far afield as Etruria, Cyrenaica, Macedon and the coasts of the Black Sea, was already well under way during the reign of Peisistratus; and the men who painted pictures on such pots, like Exekias and Amasis, were doubtless encouraged by the ruler's patronage. Towards the end of his life, pupils of these black-figure vase-painters had begun to invent a new technique known as red-figure, destined to achieve an even wider popularity, among them Psiax, Oltos and Epiktetos, all of whom sometimes signed their work.

In 527 B.C., Peisistratus died peacefully in his bed. If, as some believe, he was greater and more admirable than Pericles or any other Athenian statesman, then he was the best of all Athenians. No historian provides a record of his age, but, supposing he captured Salamis in his early thirties, he would have been between seventy-five and seventy-eight at the time of his death. Apart

from the one attempt on his life in 561 B.C., he was not again threatened by the knife of the assassin; and such was the kindliness of his character that he never brought about the death of any political opponent, for harshness and resentment were unknown to this man of infinite patience and, assuredly, of infinite wiles. Odysseus, one may suppose, was his hero and example. The designer of the Panathenaic Festival, the town planner and master-builder, the creator of the European theatre, wished only for his subjects contentment and happiness. Moreover, he was as much concerned with the well-being of the farmers and peasants of Attica as with that of the bourgeoisie, who supported him with enthusiasm. There is a tale worth repeating told by Aristotle in the sixteenth chapter of his *Constitution of the Athenians*:

His administration was temperate as has been said before, and more like constitutional government than a tyranny. Not only was he in every respect humane and mild and ready to forgive those who offended, but, in addition, he advanced money to the poorer people to help them in their labours, so that they might make their living by agriculture. . . . At the same time his revenues were increased by the thorough cultivation of the country since he imposed a tax of one-tenth on all the produce, and he often made expeditions in person into the country to inspect it and to settle disputes between individuals, that they might not come into the city and neglect their farms. It was in one of these progresses that, as the story goes, Peisistratus had his adventure with the man of Hymettus, who was cultivating the spot afterwards known as 'Tax-free Farm'. He saw a man digging and working at a very stony piece of ground, and being surprised he sent his attendant to ask what he got out of this plot of land. 'Aches and pains,' said the man; 'and that's what Peisistratus ought to have his tenth of.' The man spoke without knowing who his questioner was; but Peisistratus was so pleased with his frank speech and his industry that he granted him exemption from all taxes.

Biographers always find fascination in the story of his life and the evidences of his most remarkable personality. In the view of

one scholar – Friedrich Cornelius – his achievements mark him out as the most brilliant political personality in all Greek history. Above all, he was a realist, uninfluenced by motives of personal gain or greed, or fear, or pomposity such as other tyrants displayed. He assumed the despotic and, indeed, the kingly role because he knew himself to be fitted to give his country internal peace while he extended its influence within the orbit of the Mediterranean world. Peisistratus had those virtues and advantages which one may see and often admire in successful Greeks of the present day, for he had energy and versatility, resilience and optimism, kindness and generosity. Added to that, this brilliant man possessed two other qualities: faultless taste, combined with an inclination for dramatic effects. His capture of Salamis was turned into a *dromenon*, or elegant annual ceremony; he devised the Greater Panathenaia with all the accompanying pageantry. The gay dramatic effect produced by the girl Phyé who drove his chariot into Athens symbolized, in its way, a simple but theatrical coronation procession. The picturesque Scythian police, who acted as his bodyguard and patrolled the city like figures from a chorus, were a part of that elegant play-acting which, of course, culminated in the tragedies and comedies that began to be performed in the Theatre of Dionysos. Aristotle, writing two centuries after the reign of this great statesman, summed up in a short sentence: 'The tyranny of Peisistratus was often spoken of as the age of gold.'

THE TWO GODS OF DELPHI

ON A shelf of land, stony and sloping, was built the Sanctuary of Delphi beside the Castalian Spring. Looking from the shelf to the south-west, you see the distant Gulf of Corinth and some of the mountains of North Arcadia beyond. Below the shelf is a drop of nearly 2,000 feet into the deep and narrow gorge of the river Pleistos. You may descend with difficulty, ford the river, and climb more easily the south side of the gorge in order to get, looking northwards, the best view of the ancient sanctuary and the modern village of Kastri beside it. Then you see the cliffs towering behind Delphi to the height of another 2,000 feet. Later, the ascent of those same cliffs having been made by a rock-track called 'the Bad Stair', the traveller comes on to a high undulating plain at about 4,000 feet above sea-level. There are patches of forest, small tarns, meadows covered with the perfect wild-flowers of a Greek spring and early summer; and beyond and over all this, to the east, there rises the great snow-capped dome of Parnassus yet another 4,000 feet above the plain on which it stands.

That very condensed description of the situation within Greece of the Holiest Place of the Greeks is needed, because the position and the atmosphere of awe created for them that sense of the numinous, combined with authority, which gave the place so much power in historical Greece. Delphi, always one of the very little Greek towns, exercised an influence on the rest of Greece which now appears – and in the ancient world often appeared – most disproportionate to its size; and this influence was derived very largely from a curious procedure: the employment of the Spirit of Divination in the service of politics. It is of considerable interest to study the mechanism of prophecy and the results

achieved by its careful application on the lives and actions of individuals and States.

Apollo, the god of the place in historical times, had replaced earlier female divinities who were thought to have prophesied. The legend told that he had slain Python, a great serpent, and received the title of Pythian Apollo, for which reason his priestess was known as the Pythia. In later times the title might be given to lesser women like the young slave-girl who followed Paul and his companions at Philippi, causing them much trouble, and who was described as possessing a 'Python' spirit. But only the inspired official priestess at Delphi was really entitled to such a name. Successive Pythian priestesses were thought of as mystical brides of Apollo and were in earlier times virgins; but, after a young Pythia had been raped by a rough laird from the mountains of Thessaly, a change was introduced and the prophetess was always elderly – over fifty – though dressed symbolically in the garb of a young girl. In the days when Greek states and neighbouring kingdoms and empires flourished there were usually two or three Pythias available to take turns of duty in the *adyton* – the oracular vault situated below floor-level in the basement of the temple.

Nowadays, if you stand beside the theatre of Dionysos and look down on to the huge platform of Apollo's temple – several Doric columns of which stand up at the east end – you may see, nearer to the west end, a deep dark cavity which was approached by a steep stair. You may scramble down into it and wonder at its small size. But in ancient days this *adyton* was the Holy of Holies, to which few but a Pythia and her priest-interpreter might have access. In the small room of about 8 by 12 feet, there was, in the natural rock of the floor, a long fissure, through which water ran, brought there in pipes from the 'prophetic' spring Kassotis. That water still runs, but no longer through the basement of the temple, since it has been diverted for the use of the villagers of Kastri nearby, and is of unusual excellence. They serve it to you in the small *Hotel Castalia*. In one corner of the *adyton* stood the empty tomb of Dionysos, wherein, they said, the god's divine

remains had been kept after the giants tore him in pieces and before his father Zeus ordained his Resurrection. A bronze statue of Apollo, gilt all over and glittering in the dim light of smoking oil-lamps, stood somewhere near the centre, while in another corner was the Holiest object of all: the *omphalos*, the navel-stone, inscribed in very early letters with the word $\Lambda\Delta\varsigma$ meaning 'of Earth', the great goddess whose cult preceded that of Apollo. This little, ancient limestone fetish, once believed to mark the true centre of the earth, is only $15\frac{1}{2}$ inches in diameter and $11\frac{1}{4}$ inches high. It was covered in a net of thick fillets of wool which almost concealed it, and was flanked by a pair of solid gold eagles. Last in the catalogue of strange paraphernalia, and not least in interest, was the Holy Tripod. This was placed so that it straddled the runnel in the floor which carried the prophetic water from Kassotis, and, when the Pythia was due for her turn of duty, she sat upon this tripod. Certain early Fathers of the Church – Origen and Saint John Chrysostom – who entertained their flocks with the record of such details, reported that the Pythia was deemed to be physically impregnated by a divine essence from Apollo rising from the fissure in the rock, and consequently prophesied. Be that as it may, the Krodos Painter working about 425 B.C. in Athens, which was often closely linked with Delphi, painted in the tondo of a handsome cup a Pythia and a Priest, labelling her 'Themis', the prototype of every prophetess. She sits upon the tripod and fixes her gaze upon a silver bowl of water which she is about to drink, while in her right hand she holds a sprig of bay-laurel.

And this sprig is in a sense the most important thing in the picture, because it explains so much. She is still quiet and dignified, but that cannot last for long; soon intoxication is to come from that bay-laurel. She has washed in water from the Castalian Spring; she has drunk from the silver bowl water of Kassotis; the priest-interpreter has begun to burn, over an oil-flame, barley-grains and chopped bay-leaves, the fumes of which fill the little vault with clouds of smoke; and at that moment she begins to chew the bay-sprig in her hand. Cyanide of potassium is the name

we now give to the essence she is getting from those leaves; a small quantity, of course, or she would die, but insidious, exciting – you know well what a good cook can do today with judicious use of those subtle, provocative leaves – and intoxicating. The *adyton* fills with smoke; a small grating in the ceiling allows some fumes to escape – otherwise the celebrants would suffocate; but the escaping fumes exercise their dizzy influence on the postulants anxiously awaiting above the answer of the Prophetess. Now the Pythia has attained 'ecstasy', she has gone under – under the 'influence'; she talks, talks, talks, incoherently – but not entirely so. She has heard the question that was put and, since she has a 'spirit of divination' in which she herself completely believes, since she is possessed of 'second sight', since she has got that 'something' which we have all at some time met in some otherwise foolish fortune-teller – 'something' we have failed to explain – since she has all this, the Pythia is saying things, often well above the non-sense level. The priest-interpreter memorizes or takes down her words as quickly as may be; then there is a pause, for the words require editing and interpreting by another, the *prophetes*, or 'speaker' for the god, who may give them out either in verse or in prose. Lastly, there awaits the postulant an *exegetes Pythochrestos* – another member of the Staff, doubtless appointed for natural good manners and adroitness – whose job it is to explain the obscure and difficult bits to the satisfaction, if possible, of the serious enquirer.

Such was the mechanism of prophecy in the holiest and most celebrated of all oracles in ancient times. Its application to the active world, outside Delphi, was worthy of note both for its successes and for its failures. Why did the outer world fall for the snare with such ease? Firstly perhaps because divination, carrying the message of the god himself in that magnificent situation, with crag and crevice, gorge and rushing water, eagles wheeling among towering cliffs, skies of the bluest, but often black with deafening thunder, and ever the deep dark olive groves and distant sea – because divination in that setting must more impress the

imagination than any prophetic words given in less majestic, god-touched surroundings.

Secondly, because the Pythia was frequently right; and those who subconsciously wish to be persuaded of something remember all the times when the answer was right, forgetting most of the times when it was wrong. The Pythia had what the gipsy-woman has: an unexplained ability to skip Space – and sometimes Time – where the little affairs of individuals are concerned. She could tell a man that his maternal aunt would die within the month; she might know about King Croesus and his silly cookery test (of which more below), because trivialities could pass into a trivial mind emptied of its own trifling preoccupation. But where major issues were concerned, conflicts or policies, statesmen in conspiracy, kingdoms plotting the overthrow of kingdoms, she cannot really have functioned, unless by pure chance.

And here one must recognize the third reason for which Greek and Barbarian alike could be impressed by prophecy from Delphi: the place must certainly have had an exceptionally efficient, international, political Intelligence Service. The adroit priestly attaché, the *exegetes Pythochrestos* – call him the exegete – who explained to you any obscurities in the answer you had received, was a member of this Service, which must have possessed a valuable and important collection of archives, together with dossiers on all important persons. These may not have been kept within the sanctuary, but in some part of the little town where the priesthood had its college. In all Greece the Delphic priesthood was the only one that came near to being what we mean by the term today – a whole-time priestly caste, differentiated from other men. But, even in Delphi, they were not really whole-time men and must have had other jobs as well; nor were they all Delphic-born. That famous and brilliant polymath, Plutarch of Chaeronea, who flourished between about A.D. 46 and 125, was an honorary 'life-priest' of Delphi, a distinction which can probably best be paralleled with a Fellowship at All Souls, Oxford.

In the process of time the Delphic college must have collected

and filed a great deal of useful information about the shores of the Mediterranean Sea since every visitor from afar had plenty to tell. Constant correspondence with the kingdom of Lydia and with some lesser barbarian – that is foreign – principalities kept Apollo's 'Foreign Office' well informed; but the further a land was removed from the sea the less they knew about it. At one time it was fashionable to draw a comparison between the influence of Delphi and that of the medieval Papacy, but this will not hold except in a few minor details. Pythian Apollo possessed no authoritative control over the whole of Greek religion; he might give advice about it, but his moral instruction went little further than what was implied by the famous maxims of the Seven Sages inscribed in the entrance of his temple: '*Know thyself*', '*Don't exceed*', '*the Mean is best*'; and Apollo's representatives could not exercise anything comparable to the powers of interdict and excommunication. Only the wide knowledge which the Papacy possessed of kingdoms and of men was matched by a parallel store of knowledge possessed by Delphi. It was this which first made a great reputation for the place because of the wise and helpful advice Apollo was enabled to give to prospective colonists, especially in the seventh century B.C., the great age of Greek colonization.

Postulants might be roughly classified as follows: colonial pioneers, oriental potentates, Spartans, other Greeks; and they all derived some benefit and some hurt from the Pythian prophetic machine. The help given to Founding Fathers of Greek colonies has been mentioned, and the successful colony ever afterwards kept up its links with Delphi. Greek religion, it has been observed, was quite free of the proselytizing urge, for the Greeks never thought themselves possessed of the sole faith, and were therefore more interested in learning the beliefs of others than in propagating their own. It was only in this one matter of colonization that a touch of the missionary seemed to appear, for every new Greek colony was commanded to worship in the new settlement not only the gods of the motherland whence it derived, but also very specially 'Founder Apollo', and to build him a temple in the new

land. He was to accompany – certainly not to displace – any other gods. And for the Pythian Sanctuary there was great benefit, since it would be a graceless colony indeed which did not send to Delphi a regular supply of gifts.

Oriental potentates – and especially the multi-millionaire kings of Lydia from Gyges to Croesus – not only helped greatly to augment the reputation of Delphi, but also conferred upon it gifts of such immense wealth as to raise oracle, temple, sanctuary and town to the height of prosperity. Some fragments of these rich gifts began to be unearthed by the French excavators in 1939 and would have astonished the world had it not been absorbed in war. Gyges, who usurped the Lydian throne about 685 B.C., agreed with his opponents to abide by Apollo's decision as to whether or no he should rule, and when the Pythia duly pronounced in his favour he began to shower gifts on Delphi. The last of his line was the celebrated Croesus who, meditating a preventive war against the dangerously growing power of Persia under Cyrus after 550 B.C., decided to put all the well-known oracles of the day to the test. Accordingly he sent trusted Lydian envoys to try them out. The story of this episode as recounted by Herodotus in his First Book is entertaining:

Now his purpose in sending hither and thither was to learn if the oracles had any wisdom; so that, if they were found to know the truth, he might send a second time and ask them whether he should make war against Persia. And when he sent the Lydians to test the oracles, he charged them thus, that from the day they set forth from Sardis, they should keep count of the days and on the hundredth enquire of the oracles and ask what Croesus the son of Alyattes, king of the Lydians, was doing; and whatsoever each of the oracles should prophesy they should write down and bring back to him. Now what the other oracles prophesied is told by none; but at Delphi, as soon as the Lydians entered into the hall to enquire of the god, before they asked the question they were charged with, the Pythia spake thus in hexameter measure:

*I know the number of the sands and the measures of the sea;
 I comprehend the dumb, and hear him that speaketh not.
 A smell is come about my senses of a stout-hided tortoise,
 Seethed in a vessel of brass with the meat of a lamb;
 Brass is spread beneath it, and with brass it is clad.*

These things, when the Pythia prophesied them, the Lydians wrote down; and they departed and returned unto Sardis. And when the others that had been sent out were also come bringing their answers, then Croesus unfolded the writings one by one and looked thereon. And none of them liked him, until he read that which came from Delphi, which straightway he did accept and worshipped, deeming that the only oracle was that at Delphi because it had found out what he did. For after he had sent the messengers to the several oracles, he waited for the appointed day, and devised a thing impossible to guess: he cut in pieces a tortoise and a lamb, and himself seethed them together in a cauldron of brass, which he covered with a brazen lid.

This episode, which in all probability actually occurred, may have been evidence for the Pythia's 'second sight' and veridical vision under drugs; it was assuredly no token of her political judgment. But the King of Lydia – unable to distinguish between the trivially Inexplicable and the cosmically Ineffable – was so deeply impressed by the answer given that he put unquestioning faith in Delphi. Gifts to astound were bestowed on the sanctuary, and every townsman of Delphi received a generous money-prize. Then came the next question – the important question for which all this elaborate plan had been made: 'Croesus, the king of the Lydians and of other nations, now asketh you whether he shall make war against the Persians'. And the answer came back 'that if he made war against the Persians, he should humble a great empire'. This was no Pythia talking, but the 'interpretation' of a cautious exegete, uncertain about the balance of power and strength of armies east of the Lydian kingdom. In the event Croesus was defeated and became the prisoner of Cyrus, who

permitted him to transmit to Delphi a long message of protest and reproach. The written answer he received was simple:

Touching the prophecy that was given him, Croesus doth ill to find fault; for Apollo foretold him that if he warred against the Persians he should humble a great empire; and he thereupon, if he would have been well-counselled, ought to have sent and enquired whether he spake of his own empire or of the empire of Cyrus. But because he comprehended not the saying, neither enquired again, let him declare himself the guilty one.

The Spartans, as a whole, were a trial to Delphic patience, for the Faithful who display an excess of fidelity are always a liability to any well-organized religious machine. During the sixth century B.C., those intrepid fighters were not happy in a fast-expanding world of art and commerce. They were simple soldiers only too conscious of a sense of inadequacy – except, of course, in battle – needing direction; and ready to surrender personal initiative and to seek advice from the god through his Pythia on every trivial problem. Being poor and frugal folk, they could not bring rich presents like eastern kings or even like great Athenian landowners. Sometimes the Spartan state would consult the oracle in clumsy fashion, as when they plotted to invade and annex neighbouring Arcadia, but advertised their whole plan by enquiring publicly at Delphi whether they should attack. This at least afforded the god opportunity to administer a sharp rebuke through the Pythia, who said: 'Dost thou ask of me Arcadia? It is a big thing thou askest: I'll not give. There are many acorn-eating men in Arcadia, and they will stop thee!' But it was the private, almost unremunerative, Spartan who was always getting into the queue of postulants. The Pythia only prophesied on certain days of the month, and the priests determined the order in which questions were taken. The Lydian king and his nobles had automatic and lifelong right of precedence over all the others. Next came those who arrived with the best sacrifices and richest gifts, and penurious but persistent persons were put last. From this system there arose a scandal which shook the oracle badly.

While the great despot Peisistratus and his son Hippias ruled in Athens, the Alcmaeonids – the most powerful Athenian family opposing the despots – had to live in exile. They settled in Delphi and proceeded to work for the downfall of the tyranny in Athens. It was apparent that nothing less than the armed intervention of Sparta could bring about this end. Accordingly, they bribed the Pythian priestess to give a uniform, monotonous answer to every Spartan who asked any question whatsoever on any matter personal or official. Whatever question was put, she answered with depressing irrelevancy, 'Athens must be freed'. After a while Spartan nerves gave way under this treatment; they sent an army to Athens and expelled the tyrant, enabling the Alcmaeonid family to return. Then, when it was all over and the end achieved, the scandal came out. The Spartans were greatly distressed, for they had a firm belief in the virtues of playing the game according to the rules – the Spartan rules, of course – and were shocked when the bribery was exposed. They were not bemused by discovering that Apollo had allowed it, nor angry at the Pythia for accepting money since they themselves fell easily for the lure of gold; but they were exceedingly angry at the misbehaviour of Athenian Alcmaeonids.

Nevertheless, in the opinion of the Greek world as a whole, Delphi suffered greatly in prestige, for a venal Pythia in the sixth century B.C. could hurt the reputation of the Tripod as easily as a fifteenth-century libertine Pope could hurt that of the Chair. Yet Delphi continued to prosper, though to a lesser degree than in days of Croesus; and the same Alcmaeonids who had bribed the Pythia built for Pythian Apollo a new and splendid temple. But the priesthood was perhaps more conscious than men in certain other States of the grave threats which were slowly building up in the East against the liberties of Greece. At last the vast expedition of Xerxes started to lumber on its way, and for every questioner Apollo had only words of doom. Housman in *The Oracles* pictures the Pythia's deathly despair as she cries the warning:

RIOT IN EPHEBUS

*The King with half the East at heel is marched from lands of morning;
Their fighters drink the rivers up, their shafts benight the air.
And he that stands will die for nought, and home there's no returning.
The Spartans on the sea-wet rock sat down and combed their hair.*

The Spartans did – before Thermopylae, where those bravest fighters in all history died with Leonidas.

At this point, the great bureau of international information gave up hope. Herodotus has a rather confused account of what ensued, because later on the priesthood managed to muddle him – and others – and to cover their tracks when events turned out contrary to expectations. Probably their archives were stuffed with accounts of the vastness and power of Persia – accounts sometimes exaggerated. They had seen the mighty Croesus fall before Cyrus. What hope for the little States of Greece before the far mightier Xerxes? The priests, and perhaps the Pythia, stayed at their posts. Collaboration or extinction seemed to face them; they chose for themselves – and counselled for others – the former course. After Thermopylae a Persian force left the main army to cross the pass by the Arachova route, to occupy Delphi and to take over the Sanctuary with its stores of wealth which the Great King had no wish to neglect, since 'Xerxes, as I am told', said Herodotus, 'knew all that was notable in the temple better than the treasures which he left at home, because so many men continually spake with him thereof, and especially of the offerings of Croesus'. One of the Delphic priests, Akeratos by name, casting about for a visible token of their surrender that might be understood by a foreigner, took down a suit of dedicated armour and laid it in front of the temple even as the Persians came into sight.

Yet the Persians never got there. The priests with their staff and attendants, some sixty souls, were ready to bow before the inevitable. But the citizens of Delphi would not have it thus. They had sent their women and children across the gulf into Peloponnese, and the men ascended the crags of Parnassus by 'the Bad Stair',

carrying their valuables up to the Corycian cave, sacred to Pan and the Nymphs, which became the headquarters of the Resistance. That fund of courage, daring and resource, with which modern Hellenes were astonishing the world a decade ago, has always distinguished the Greeks; and the Delphians showed it in 480 B.C. So far the invaders' triumph had been complete; the dead still lay unburied at Thermopylae; Salamis was yet to be fought, and no Pythian citizen or farmer could have foreseen either that surprising victory or the annihilated Persian fleet. Many of the Delphians were shepherds – the coins of Delphi all bore the heads of rams and goats; and any herdsman in search of pasture for his flocks on the rugged flanks of Parnassus knew every rock and ledge above the shelf of land and the Castalian gorge. Up on the crag called Hyampia – above the angle where the road from Arachova bends sharply round the towering rocks and where Delphi comes suddenly into view – the shepherds seem to have been able to dislodge a great mass of rock, the perilous instability of which may have been already known to them. The timing was perfect. A thunderstorm – constant phenomenon in that region – helped with the stage effects.

From Parnassus [says Herodotus] two mountain-tops were broken off and rolled down upon them with a great crashing and overthrew exceeding many of them. Dismay fell upon the barbarians. And when the Delphians perceived that they fled, they descended and pursued after them and slew no small number of them.

Akeratos, the priest who had grounded the armour in front of the temple, and his despondent colleagues, recovering from their surprise may have been startled into belief in divine intervention. They promptly issued an official version, that the sacred armour had moved out miraculously, and that there were seen two warriors of greater than human stature – ancient heroes of the place – pursuing and slaying Persians. Not a very convincing tale.

After the relentless attacks on the barbarians and after their expulsion from Greece, thanks were offered up to the gods, and

not least to Pythian Apollo. If the citizens and shepherds, rather than the priests, had saved the Holy Place, it was still Apollo acting through his people. Victorious states dedicated splendid offerings at Delphi, partly because anything you set up there was bound to be seen by other Greeks. Yet, amid all the celebrations, men sometimes remembered that a Pythia had within living memory been bribed, and that a priesthood had counselled collaboration. For most Greeks such happenings were no reflection on Apollo nor even on his Pythia; but the wisdom, reliability and impartiality of the priestly body fell under suspicion, and things were never quite the same for many years to come. The glory and the authority of sixth-century Delphi was departed.

From this time on the oracle seems to have been consulted rather less frequently than in former days, partly because its reliability had more than once been under suspicion, partly because among very many of the Greeks a respect for human reason was overshadowing superstitious practices. But, since Apollo was himself the greatest promoter of law and reason, there were still postulants; there were spectators and competitors for the quadrennial games; there were pilgrims and sightseers; and the Delphians, like the population of any famous place of pilgrimage, presently became little better than profiteers in the faith of simpletons and parasites on God. States now began to set up showy monuments at Delphi commemorating their little internecine wars and victories, so that the large, nearly rectangular sanctuary became a kind of 'crowing-perch' from which rival cities proclaimed their deeds. At the lower end of the enclosure, on the right, there was a gate by which the sacred way entered, and here there seems to have been a demand for small sites on which states might set up commemorative groups of figures. The Spartans crowed over the Athenians, the Arcadians over the Spartans; and it is a significant fact that the people of Argos put up no less than three monuments; for in the great Persian wars these Argive people had 'Medized' and their name was conspicuously absent from the great bronze

serpent-column set up as an offering from the allied Hellenes who had conquered the Persian barbarians. Consequently, they sought to compensate for their sense of guilty insufficiency by three ostentatious groups of figures.

For the Greeks the first and most important aspect of Apollo was certainly his championship of law and order, an aspect which his famous temple maxims really emphasized. And what has been called his 'legal activity' embraced criminal, civil and constitutional codes, for which reason his help was precious to every newly-founded Greek Colony in the Mediterranean lands. But here one must face the astonishing, the surprising, the uncomfortable fact that he shared Delphi with another god who came near to being his absolute opposite – Dionysos. This is no fancy. The facts were naturally and gladly accepted by the Greeks. It is we who too easily forget them. Plutarch, that brilliant historian and scholar, was himself for many years a priest of Apollo at Delphi, and we could wish for no better authority. 'To Dionysos', these are his words, 'no less than to Apollo, Delphi is home.' When did this happen – and how? Those are the first questions to come to the mind; and it is only fairly recent scholarship that has been able to give the answers.

When Homer wrote – rather earlier than 700 B.C. – there were twelve Olympian gods and Dionysos was *not* of their number. Homer, bard of an ancient and magnificently feudal aristocracy, knew about the god and that he came from foreign parts, but did not attach much importance to a deity, even though reputedly Zeus-begotten, who was then a god of the lesser classes. At some time in the eighth century B.C. wandering bands – ecstatic devotees of this strange god – had moved from regions bordering upon both sides of Hellespont into Greece. The natives of those regions were called Thracians in Europe, and Phrygians in Asia; but were one in kin and language, the tongue being related to Greek and easily learnt. Now the cult which these wandering Thracian bands of men and women brought into Greece was utterly different from the quiet gentlemanly cults of the old nobles who

worshipped Zeus and the Olympian Family. First and foremost the worship of Dionysos was intensely mystical, and therefore fraught with possibilities of benefit or of injury to mankind. So long as any part of humanity continues to believe in divinity, to investigate the meaning of deity and to seek relation with the divine, there is bound to be mysticism, that indefinable thing which may lead men and women into unhealthy, dark and masochistic actions, or which can involve them in the rush and *ecstasis* of union with nature and creation. The Greeks were very fortunate, since mysticism learnt through Dionysos was not comprehended by way of abnegation and mortification of the flesh, but by way of oblivion and abandonment to the body's clean desires. But in both forms mystical excess may bring disaster; and it seems likely that in the sixth century B.C. Dionysiac *orgia* bid fair to injure humanity as much as did monastic *asceticism* in the fifth century of our era.

A picture of what occurred in Greece is painted in a great drama – some think the greatest of all the plays which Euripides wrote – *The Bacchae*. The chief characters are given names out of old mythologies; but the themes, the action, the thoughts, words and wild movements of the chorus of Bacchic women, are all things of the Poet's own day, the fifth century B.C. Dionysos, the central figure – at times called Bromios, 'the Boisterous' – is also Bacchos, for that is another name for him. But each ecstatic old and young man, each girl and woman, in that throng of his followers, is also Bacchos; for this is the heart of the mystery, that when you have given yourself over to this 'madness', you are of the god and the god is of you. He, in you, drives you to the woods and mountains; you, containing the god, perform acts that no normal mortal can do. But you are not alone the god because the other members of the throng are also the god, for the men are Bacchoi and the women Bacchai. 'Mad ones', Maenads, is another name for them; but in both Athens and Delphi they were called Thyiads, of whom more must presently be related. All this is strange to us, but was utterly real in those days; and the chorus in Euripides' play expresses the mystic emotion known to thousands of women and

girls in ancient Greece. They enter clad in fawn-skins over disordered robes and holding each in her hand a *thyrsos*, a long wand tipped with a bunch of leaves, ivy or vine.

Who is abroad, who is abroad? Who is within? Let him withdraw, let each man keep his lips in hallowed silence; for I am about to sing to Dionysos the hymns that were ever customary.

Blessed is he, who having the good fortune to know the secret mysteries of the gods, consecrates his life and hath his soul filled with the spirit of Bacchos in the holy purification of his mountain revels; who, brandishing the *thyrsos* aloft, his head crowned with ivy, serves Dionysos. On, on ye Bacchai, ye who bring Bromios, the god born of a god, Dionysos, home from the Phrygian hills to the spacious cities of Greece, who bring Bromios. . . .

Soon shall the whole land go forth to dance, as often as Bromios leads his revellers to the mountains, to the mountains; where abides that host of women driven out in madness by Dionysos from beside their looms and shuttles. . . .

Sweet upon the mountains is he who falls to the ground from among the hurrying bands of Bacchantes, clad in his holy garment of fawn-skin, as he pursues the blood of the slain goat. . . . The land is flowing with milk, flowing with wine, flowing with nectar of the bees, and there is a fragrance as of Syrian incense. And the Bacchant with a flaming torch of pinewood fixed to his wand brandishes it as he runs, rousing the straying bands and making them leap up with his cries as he shakes his delicate locks in the wind. And amid the cries of 'Evœ' he shouts 'On ye Bacchai, on ye Bacchai, hymn Dionysos to the sound of the booming drums, honouring with happy shouts the happy god, with Phrygian cries and clamour, when the sacred melodious pipe sings with sacred sportive music and to its tune ye hurry to the mountains, to the mountains'. And the Bacchanal bounds with nimble feet, happy as a foal with its mother at pasture.

These women, because they are Bacchai, carry the *thyrsos* since it is the god's own mystical emblem and wear his holy garment, the

fawn-skin hair-shirt, raiment of mysticism. But Greek mystics wore it with the hair-side outwards.

People who of a sudden impulse abandon the social routine, the looms and shuttles, of their group, deserting parents, spouses or children in order to indulge any form of private, personal, emotionally religious practice, are certain to incur resentment, for they are being all too literally 'un-popular'. Periodic bouts of Dionysiac frenzy may have come to Greek villages and tiny townships in the seventh century B.C. and caused not only resentment but even some persecution of the cult by conventional persons. By the beginning of the sixth century, however, some cities of Greece were growing fairly large, and for such Dionysos Bromios, with his mysteries that drove the women wildly to the mountains, became a subject of the very gravest concern. There are indications that the whole trouble was resolved during the first half of the sixth century B.C. by the actions of three brilliant Greek statesmen, and in characteristic Greek fashion. In important centres the cult of Dionysos was taken into the mechanism of the State cults. Periander, who ruled in Corinth from about 625 to 585 B.C., deliberately introduced a Dionysiac festival into the richest Greek city of the day. His neighbour Cleisthenes, Despot of Sicyon, displaced the cult of an old local hero by the cult of Dionysos. Moreover, Cleisthenes, who, supporting the Delphians in a local war with Crisa and commanding the allied forces, founded the quadrennial Pythian Games in 582 B.C. at Delphi, may have been the man who introduced the actual worship of Dionysos into Delphi. Or, if he did not bring it in, he so strengthened and encouraged it as to give to Bacchos a status only second to that of Pythian Apollo. The Holy Sepulchre of Dionysos was placed in the secret underground *adyton* of the temple beside the navel-stone of 'Earth' and the sacred Tripod of the Pythia. Thus to combine the realms of the careful god of law and order, and of the mystical god of licence and abandon, was one of the most startling examples of Greek genius for adjustment. Law could be redeemed from mechanistic rote by the human natural contact of the anarchic god,

while licence could be put under control by coupling it with the god of self-knowledge and moderation. Order should learn about disorder, and disorder about order.

Corinth, Sicyon, Delphi were three places, Athens being the fourth, where great skill was used to accommodate the Dionysiac trouble. Peisistratus ruled Athens from 566 B.C.; and, at about the time when he founded the Panathenaic games for Athene, he also instituted the Great Dionysia. That is to say, he brought into Athens, and installed at the foot of the Acropolis, the ancient wooden statue of Dionysos from Attic Eleutheræ, on the frontier of Bocotia, a village which was claiming to be the god's birth-place. With the statue came its priest and his little company of village mummers called 'goat-singers' – in Greek *tragōdoi* – country lads and devotees of the god who at times kept company with the local village 'Maenads', the god-possessed girls who wandered in the woods of Mount Cithæron. Under the walls of the Acropolis they ranged some wooden seats for spectators in a semicircle, and put up a little stage on to which the first mummer leapt to tell his tale, while the others answered back and sang short choruses. Here the *tragōdoi* created for a city audience 'tragedy', and the theatre was born. Presently 'revel-singers' *kōmōdoi* – produced shows of another kind and 'comedy' came into being. Yet it was all built round the cult of Dionysos; and it canalized a great flood of energy that would have found anarchical outlets elsewhere. It did this for the men. But not for the women. In their case Delphi had to help.

'Thyiads' was the name used both in Athens and at Delphi – but not, apparently, elsewhere – for 'Maenads', the women in *ecstasis*; and this formed so strong a link between the women and girls of both communities that they established a joint biennial enterprise for the impelling mysteries. No certain date can be given for the beginning of this union of Thyiads from two places so far apart from one another; but it may well have been started after the days of Peisistratus and at the time when the Athenian Alcmaeonid family (whose close connection with Delphi has already been mentioned) were in control of Athens. That would be towards the

end of the sixth century B.C. Late in the summer or autumn of every second year the Chief Priest of Athens selected a troupe of women and girls from among the best Athenian families to be *Thyiads* for the State. No certainty exists about their number, but as figures fourteen and sixteen have been suggested; and it is not likely that there was more than a score of them in any year. There was doubtless a woman experienced, but like *Lysistrata* relatively young and active, who had made the expedition several times and was therefore the Leader. At Delphi such a one was 'Principal' – at least in later days; and Plutarch, when priest at Delphi, valued the Senior *Thyiad*, *Klea*, as an intimate friend. But the Athenian women and girls chosen to be *Thyiads* were committed to weeks of hard outdoor life; for, starting in late October, they had to make their way on foot from Athens, by way of Eleusis, Eleutherae, Plataea, Thebes, Lebadeia, Panopeus and Arachova, to Delphi. It was a route little short of a hundred miles, traversing rough, steep mountain-passes; and it may be reckoned today as about forty-five walking hours, or five walking days. There were, of course, rests on the pilgrimage; they stopped in towns where *Dionysos* was worshipped to perform their dances, as Pausanias, the traveller, learnt from personal conversation with some *Thyiads* as late as the second century of our era. Perhaps they were ten days or more on the way. Yet such a walk undertaken barefoot in early winter proves that the young women and girls of Athens were assuredly tough. The once popular notion that Athenian females were dull, unenterprising creatures, as physically inadequate as though they had never stepped outside of a convent or a seraglio, and therefore held in disdain by the men, is now ceasing to be maintained with conviction. The *Thyiads* are one more example, if such be needed, of some temporary independence and of audacious activity on the women's part.

It is November and the news has come that the Athenians are near. The Delphian girls go out to meet them. An hour's journey away the two throngs mingle happily. Together they pass below the crag of *Hyampia*, from which the great rocks had crashed

down upon the greedy Medes. Together they enter the precinct gate and wind up the paved way past the east front of Apollo's temple and along its north side to that place which is the 'temple' of Dionysos – the theatre. Every theatre is a temple of Bromios; and the subconscious knowledge of its ineluctable consecration to the spirit of the god may explain why even to our own day 'ciphers to this great accompt on your imaginary forces work'. The Delphic theatre, up at the highest corner of the Sacred Precinct, was at first a semi-circular hollow scooped from the mountain-side and only later built of solid stone. From this the Thyiads pass into the township of Delphi to stay with their hosts, whom one may assume to have been Thyiads too, or the parents of Thyiad girls. If you have been to the place early in the winter season, you can more easily picture the setting and the view. To the south and west the sea in the gulf of Itēa looks oddly like quicksilver, and the mountains, half-veiled in cloud, seem very distant. From the gorge of the river Pleistos below, with its long dark green mat of olive trees joining the huge olive-tree carpet of the Itēan plain, mists lift and gather and build themselves into clouds, which rise still higher as though hurrying to join the towering mass that shrouds Parnassus. When the sun comes fitfully through, he still gives warmth, but the shadows have a wintry chill. In that setting and climate, imagination may picture what happens after a few days of rest for the Athenians. At sunset the air is tense with a knowledge that Mystery is soon to begin. The Thyiads are gathered in the theatre's circular orchestra, fawn-skins falling over their pleated robes. Each holds a thyrsos; some have castanets or little drums; some hold young animals in their arms. The evening draws in, and a few Bacchoi climb up the steps holding lighted torches; somebody touches a drum and a sigh goes up. At the altar in the centre the priest of Dionysos cuts the throat of a young he-goat, a sacrifice to Bromios who is coming to possess his votaries. Bacchos is not merely the wine-god but the god of all natural fluids – wine and honey, milk and such others as betoken a god of fertility. The blood of the goat runs out on to the altar, down on

to the pavement. Strange that either fasting *or* raw meat, scourge *or* thyrsos, the tolled bell *or* the beaten drum, the body buried in the hooded habit *or* naked limbs dancing upon the mountain top, may equally produce a sense of mystical union with God.

High up on the Bad Stair a shepherd youth, with a tail of horse-hair tied on to make one think him a satyr, puts his double flutes to his lips. The thin weird notes are magnified and repeated by echoes. A girl in the theatre screams and flings back her head. 'Evoc, Evoc! He comes!' Drum, and another drum; rhythm, and the castanets begin to clapper. It has grown almost dark, for the torches seem brighter now. They are moving up through the gangways between the rows of seats and out to the highest corner where the path leads straight to the Bad Stair. The whole throng of Thyiads follows the torch-bearers for 'Bromios leads his revellers to the mountains, to the mountains'. You, the barbarian from another land, may sit there alone in the theatre, wrapped in your warmest cloak, and look up to the mountain-side to see the torch-lights slowly rising in zigzags up that wild track, while snatches of the music of Bromios the Boisterous come drifting down. For nearly two hours you may still see those lights before they vanish four thousand feet up. And what happened then?

Part of the answer is in the *Bacchae* of Euripides, but not all. For that play is not set in the chill of creeping winter, which these Athenian girls and women had to face in company with the Delphian Thyiads. The Corycian Cave, to which they climbed, is not easy of access nowadays – it is about three hours on foot from Delphi; but it is very large and a warm shelter in a storm. Once upon a time news came to Delphi that, before the Thyiads could reach the cave, they had been overwhelmed in a great snow blizzard, and the rescue-party which climbed up to look for them had all their clothing frozen stiff. Another time Thyiads lost their way one night after they had been ranging the mountain, and came down unwittingly to the township of Amphissa where the citizens found them next morning asleep from sheer exhaustion in the

market-place. Such is the picture, so far as we can draw it, of the winter *orgia* in all their dire austerity, and the Athenian Thyiads knew only these; but there is other evidence for spring-time *orgia*, on the Corycian plain and round the sacred cave, when the Delphian Thyiads climbed the mountain without their Athenian sisters. Then there were goats to be milked in the flowered meadows, and the male participants with tied-on satyr-tails carried skins of wine. No doubt exists that at this season there was sexual freedom. Euripides in another play, the *Ion*, the scene of which is laid in Delphi, held it natural. The hero, Ion, considers it to be a convincing account of his birth, that his reputed father Xuthos came as a visitor to Delphi and took part with a throng of Thyiads in the Bacchic festival there.

- ION. Did you stay in a hostel?
 XUTHOS. Yes, and with Delphian girls.
 I. Do you mean you were one of their throng?
 X. They were maenad girls of Bacchos.
 I. Were you sober or wined?
 X. Under the pleasant influence of Bacchos.
 I. That indeed was my begetting!

But, along with this, one must ponder another passage from Euripides' *Bacchae*: 'Dionysos compels no woman to be chaste. Chastity is a matter of character, and she who is naturally chaste will partake of Bacchic rites without being touched.' Their state of *ecstasis* left the Bacchai free to follow either the instincts or the restraints of nature. No inhibitions stopped the satisfaction of desire; no exhibitionist urge drove them towards promiscuous folly. Even to the end, the cult of Dionysos was something of a mystic and terrifying incursion from the outside invisible world – an incursion from the dizzy heights beyond the limits of conscious personal men; and, when this cult, reaching out to Central Italy, was suddenly discovered to exist underground in Rome, it was suppressed by a horrified Senate which promulgated in 187 B.C. its

famous 'Decree about Bacchanals'. But the Greeks had done better by the well-devised partnership of the brother-gods Apollo and Dionysos. By 432 B.C. when the Parthenon was complete, the latter had become the twelfth Olympian god, replacing Hestia, a gentle and self-effacing goddess.

Emphasis on Dionysiac worship must not disguise the fact that it was still Apollo's oracle which continued to bring to Delphi the largest number of visitors, mainly private persons now enquiring about private affairs. Politically the small town was assured of the protection of a union of surrounding states, called the Amphictionic League; and, when Philip of Macedon obtained in 346 B.C. membership of that League, the oracle naturally became pro-Macedonian. After Alexander it maintained good relations with all the Successor Kingdoms, and later with the neighbouring confederacy of Aetolians, who appear to have saved the place from robbery and destruction at the hands of a vast horde of Gauls who invaded Greece in 279 B.C. The generals of the Roman Republic treated Delphi well, until the ruthless Sulla stripped it of all its remaining wealth to pay his soldiery. A hard period of poverty followed until the reign of Nero, who patronized the oracle and gave it much money, though he offset this by robbing the Sacred Precinct of five hundred bronze statues destined to decorate his 'Golden House' in Rome. Yet imperial patronage, which reached its climax in the reign of the magnanimous Hadrian, provided for Delphi an Indian Summer of elegant tranquillity, before the corrosive action of Gnosticism, Mithraism and other half-eastern proletarian beliefs began, in the third century of our era, to undermine Apolline faith. Early in that century Clement of Alexandria pretended that the oracle was moribund; but for most Christian apologists the oracular powers of the place were never in doubt, and only the emphasis was changed: Pythia and priests were Satanic, Apollo a devil in disguise. The last of all oracular responses is said to have been given in A.D. 363 to the Emperor Julian, philosopher, soldier and apostate, but a man inadequate to champion or to heal the ancient faith of Hellas:

*Say ye to Caesar: 'Fallen our fair-built columns lie.
Phoebus hath left his temple, his laurel of prophecy,
His speaking spring – yea, even the spring that spake is dry.'*

Nevertheless, 'even today', as F. L. Lucas has but recently declared, 'the spirit of Ancient Greece can be felt, perhaps, more intensely at Delphi than anywhere else. . . . In this rocky valley the God of reason and control long ago yielded a place beside him to his ecstatic and untamed younger brother, Dionysos; and that myth can still symbolize the eternal need for balance in the human soul – the danger alike of crushing the primitive and unconscious within us or of surrendering to it'. Balance and toleration finally disappeared before A.D. 400; for the emperor Theodosius was able to close the sanctuary and the emperor Arcadius to demolish it; but the actions of those blundering despots could not forever stifle humanism sprung from the worship of Apollo.

RIOT IN EPHESUS

THE civilized world, that comfortable economic union of nations which Greeks called 'the Economy', was a pleasant place for free men to live in between A.D. 41 and 54, when the ruler of the Roman Empire was Tiberius Claudius Drusus Caesar Augustus. Gifted, eccentric and a passionate antiquarian, Claudius gave to the study of Etruscan lore and ancient Roman religion as much time as the cares of State permitted. His Roman legal mind found in observation of the flights of birds and study of entrails, with their well-coded and predestinate interpretations, a soothing sense of rule and order. Obedience to established law and the ancient wisdom of augury comforted him; and he would have been glad to win back Rome and Italy to the old order of his ancestors. What of the Greeks who were his subjects? He could not altogether approve their volatile nature, which with an insatiable curiosity combined a dangerous avidity for knowledge; and he might have shared the opinion of a contemporary of his, named Luke, who said of the Athenians, that 'they had no leisure for anything but talking about or listening to the last new idea'. The Greeks, however, had the greatest of all virtues – a frank, generous and fervent tolerance of any religious belief or practice whatsoever.

That Claudius was himself a tolerant ruler was shown, first by his prompt reversal of the anti-Jewish policy of his predecessor Caius (Caligula), second by the placing of his boyhood's friend Herod Agrippa on the throne of Judaea, and third by his clemency to the Jews of the Dispersion in Alexandria and in other Greek cities. In Rome, however, the situation was rather different, especially between the years A.D. 47 and 52 when he was engaged in an earnest campaign for the restoration of the old Roman religion

and for the suppression of foreign cults. Accordingly, in the year 49, it was suddenly decreed – our authority is Luke in the *Acts of the Apostles* – that all Jews should leave Rome. But their great numbers would have made this impracticable, and it is generally held that the orthodox Jews were constrained by certain fresh rules, but that one section of them – rather, a sect – was deported; for the historian Suetonius stated that Claudius ‘expelled from Rome those Jews who made constant disturbances at the instigation of Chrestus’. Here the implication seems to be that the Roman police were aware of brawling between two groups of Jewish residents, and that the smaller body declared they were impelled to their actions by a certain Christus.

Two Christian refugees from Rome – Prisca, alias Priscilla, and her husband Aquila – had settled in Corinth by the year A.D. 50, Gallio being Proconsul of the Province of Achaia, at the time when Paul of Tarsus arrived in the same city and became for a while their lodger. All three travelled by sea to Ephesus in A.D. 51, where Paul spent a short time before finding a boat to take him to Syria, for a visit to Antioch. By A.D. 52 he was back in Ephesus, which became his headquarters for three adventurous years. Because the nineteenth chapter of the *Acts of the Apostles* gives only the briefest notice of this period, it is well worth filling in the historical details from our wide classical and archaeological knowledge of what was then the greatest city of Asia Minor; for the chief cult, the festivals and the social structure of Ephesus, must have had a marked effect upon the apostle’s thoughts and pronouncements.

The citizens of Ephesus appear to have had a single-minded devotion to the goddess Artemis. With an ease frequently characteristic of religious persons, they accepted two hopelessly conflicting concepts of the one and undivided godhead. In their thoughts, she was a young and lovely huntress roaming the woods and mountains, delighting, like her brother Apollo, in music and the dance, free and unattached, ‘chaste Dian’, owing no obedience to any male. Yet the image in her huge temple presented a totally

different concept; for it was a rigid, archaic figure heavily laden with tasteless metallic adornment that betokened great wealth. A glance at the history of the city and its goddess may help to explain the anomaly.

Tradition said that somewhere about 900 B.C. certain Ionians from Greece, escaping from invading Dorians, founded, under the leadership of an Athenian prince, the Greek city of Ephesus. There had been a Carian township and a temple before it was annexed; and many of the Ionians took Carian wives and, with them, certain customs that entailed considerable freedom for women. The same applied in other famous Ionian cities, like Miletus and Clazomenae; and this accounts for the swift urbanization of the divinity whom the Greek colonists of Ephesus brought with them. The worship of Artemis at Ephesus centred in the huge, impressive and fabulously wealthy temple which later became known as one of the Seven Wonders of the World. We note several stages in the development both of the temple and of the principal image within it. At some distant date – possibly as far back as 2000 B.C. – the inhabitants possessed a small sacred stone believed to have fallen from Zeus or from heaven, and known as a *Diopetes* in Greek. This *Diopet* was probably no meteorite, but some neolithic implement – an axe or, more likely, a pounder – and was held in the greatest veneration. Later, when Christian moralists began to reproach Pagans for revering images made by the hands of man, the Ephesians at least could reply, 'that which we most revere was not made with hands but fell to earth from God Himself'. For that small sacred *Diopet* endured till the end of Paganism, when it was hidden away; and it may still be in existence at the present moment.

The second stage is not yet historical and involves a story about Amazons. Now Amazons, as is well known, had a tremendous attraction for the Greeks, to whom the idea of a tribe of man-ruling, battle-fit huntresses was a matter of perpetual interest which provided a theme popular in Greek art for many centuries. Until recently critics have inclined to the view that all Amazon legends

were mere expansions of travellers' tales about barbarous nomads living on the remote outer fringes of the ancient civilized world. But we, who not long since have heard much about the actual battalions of women soldiers on the eastern front and in China, are bound to be less sceptical; and it is probable that, among Phrygians and Carians, such people did exist. It was alleged in any case that Amazons founded the first shrine at Ephesus, possibly before the Greeks arrived there, and had a very primitive image of a goddess, later identified with Artemis. It is likely that this idol was made of a palm-trunk, for that tree continued to be associated with the real Artemis whom the Greeks brought over with them. Theophrastus, founder of scientific botany, described palm-wood as both tough and easy to carve, and therefore popular for making images. Around this image the Amazons had performed a ritual dance, which was kept up in later centuries; for the poet Callimachus, who about 300 B.C. wrote a charming Hymn to Artemis, described the dance; and he ended with the warning 'let not anyone shun the yearly dance'. Earlier in the fifth century B.C., the Ephesians had invited four of the most famous bronze workers of the day - Polykleitos, Pheidias, Phradmon and Kresilas - to make for the famous sanctuary statues of Amazons. Of these several marble copies still survive, as well as a fine relief of a young Amazon excavated at Ephesus. The original bronzes showed them as youthful huntresses with short *chitons*, leaving one or both breasts bare and the limbs free like the Ephesian girls of the ritual dance. Some marble copyists turned them into 'wounded' Amazons, a tasteless innovation, for they really were shown as tired after some kind of strenuous exercise. The third stage of development came with the building of the archaic temple, to the endowment of which Croesus, who reigned from 564 to 546 B.C., made a contribution. Fragments, inscribed with his name, of the columns which he gave to the temple are preserved in the British Museum; and the 'Croesus-temple' was famous in its day as the biggest of all Greek fanes.

At this time, a new and delightful statue of the goddess was

carved in hard wood by a celebrated sculptor of the day named Endoios. It resembled other standing figures of girls, made in the sixth century, long-haired, upright, feet together, elbows to sides, forearms held out, the garment clinging and having life-like eyes inlaid in enamel. But this quiet simplicity was not maintained for long. Various inland cities and towns of Asia Minor had cults of goddesses with other names, primitive and untouched by Ionian elegance, and their images were sometimes crude blocks, heavily veiled and hung with many and gaudy ornaments. Unfortunately, the hierarchy of Artemis Ephesia permitted themselves to lapse into a similar vulgarity; and by the time Paul made Ephesus his headquarters every inch of the image was bedizened with metal – probably gold – save for the wooden hands, feet and head; and the goddess grew year by year blacker in the face from the constant use of rich olive-oil rubbed into the antique wood. In our own day, art-lovers have observed with regret, in both eastern and western churches, brilliant old 'icons' and delicate medieval carved statues of the Virgin Mary and of Saints rendered aesthetically repellent by gold and silver plating sometimes incrustated with stones. In similar fashion, a fine simple figure by Endoios was turned into a monster of vulgarity for the profit of a priesthood already fabulously rich. The taste for vulgarity grows with feeding until it becomes an appetite ravenous for tawdry glitter; and a hierarchy may easily take the line that the more one piles on to a venerated image, the more will godhead be gratified. Kings and merchant princes gave, and the temple staff accepted, an ever-increasing panoply of gold and silver clothing for the goddess, till she could never hope to wear her complete wardrobe at any one time. Mistresses of the Robes were appointed from among the wealthy and established Ephesian families, to dress and re-dress the image, the various ancient copies of which provide evidence that its metallic paraphernalia were frequently changed.

Two features of this image were particularly strange. Coin-pictures and copies of the statue depict Artemis with what, at first sight, seemed to be many udder-like breasts, hanging sometimes

well below the waist. But these were no part of the old black wooden statue; they were put on, apron-like, above the clothing and there were many sets of them, with protuberances varying in number from eleven up to forty-four. Since they were either gilt or, more probably, golden, they had the colour of ripening dates, and each set represented a date-cluster with large, but not unnaturally large, fruit. In Ephesus, the date-palm was definitely sacred to the goddess. Two Christian authors, of the third and fourth centuries of our era, each of them once referred to the dates as udders and labelled the figure many-breasted – a piece of folly that has died hard. The other strange appurtenance of the image was a small temple-like shrine, open on three sides and worn instead of a hat on top of the head. It seems probable that this contained the *Diopet*, the small sacred stone which was believed to have fallen from Zeus and represented mystically the infant Artemis herself. It was thus kept in close contact with the image, who carried it, as girls in the south carry loads today, upon their heads; and it was both the most ancient and the most holy object in all the Sanctuary. This was not a 'godhead like unto gold, or silver, or stone graven by art and man's device', but a heavenly supernatural creation, as all men of every faith must allow.

Pictures on coins of Claudius show us the extraordinary figure as it then existed; and later coins, as well as marble copies, are evidence that it long retained this similar, and yet variable, appearance – shrine and basket on the head, nimbus-veil decorated with animals, earrings, heavy necklaces, long sleeves with lions on them, pectoral, the legs encased in a sheath ornamented with empanelled animals, and over all an apron of clustered dates, large as the royal dates of Babylon that measured each six fingers across; from the hands woollen fillets hung down, while on either side of the goddess a friendly stag gazed upward. Within the confines of her temple and the wide precinct round it, Artemis gave sanctuary. Thieves, outlaws and runaway slaves could not be touched within the holy area. There was much in this greatly to trouble Paul during his three years spent in Ephesus. In times past, he

knew, 'Jerusalem the Holy' had also enjoyed that precious right of giving asylum; but the LORD the Invisible had given it – not a gold-encumbered creature that was as Ashtoreth, an abomination of the Gentiles.

Other disturbing factors existed in the great Ionian city – wealth, banking and business prosperity. The great temple of Artemis Ephesia was the richest and most trusted safe-deposit bank in the whole Greek world, honoured by Croesus and by Persian kings and satraps, as well as by powerful City States. Alexander the Great contributed to the reconstruction of the temple after a fire. All the Hellenistic kings, Roman proconsuls and emperors respected and enriched the place. From 650 B.C. to A.D. 250 the temple remained unmolested and unrobbed, a record of some nine-hundred years, unparalleled elsewhere. Ephesus' continuous financial activity must have been a magnet that attracted many Jews of the Dispersion, always excellent men of affairs. Some were probably interested in the new message of Paul, as also were some of the wealthy and distinguished Greeks, though in a more detached and philosophic way; for Luke in the *Acts of the Apostles* states that some of the Asiarchs, high dignitaries of the Ephesian priesthood, were among Paul's friends. In such circumstances a genius in rebellion against society was bound to run into trouble; and letters he wrote from Ephesus prove that Paul spent some time in prison and believed his life endangered, though his Roman citizenship assured him of relative immunity. If he wrote some of those letters from prison, a good deal becomes clear; and many modern scholars hold that, while in confinement there, he produced three letters to the Christians in Corinth [(a) *I Corinthians*, (b) *II Corinthians* x-xiii, (c) *II Corinthians* i-ix], as well as a letter to the Colossians, and a letter to Philemon about a runaway slave-boy – found, perhaps, taking asylum with Artemis Ephesia.

The letters to the Corinthians seem to reveal certain pre-occupations that troubled Paul during his comparatively long residence in the great Ionian city. He was worried about money, about idols, about sex and about female liberty; and it was

Ephesus where he was living, rather than Corinth to which he was writing, that rendered him near distraught about these matters. The Corinthians had asked his advice about celibacy, circumcision and eating meat of animals offered at Pagan sacrifices. He gave his advice; but most of his writing was full of other thoughts. Commentators have sometimes attributed the severity of his regulations for women to the fact that Corinth encouraged more 'immorality' – meaning sexual freedom – than did other cities. But there is nothing to support such a view, for the celebrated temple of Aphrodite, where girl votaries lived a cloistered life of poverty, though not of chastity, devoting their bodies to the service of the goddess, was far out of the city on the summit of Acrocorinthus, nearly one-thousand nine-hundred feet above sea-level. Those girls, for whom great poets in the past had written epigrams and odes, were respected by the Greeks; while no Jew, his memories full of ancient curses on votaries of Ashtoreth, would ever have climbed the mountain. Corinth and its ports were as bad as, but no worse than, any great maritime city, whether Alexandria, Ephesus or Marseilles.

Paul was worried about money because his own poverty was in contrast to the wealth of his Ephesian acquaintances, and more troubled than usual about idols because so great a city could show single-minded devotion to an ugly image, and most upset about sex and female liberty because he observed the absolute freedom, greater than anywhere else, enjoyed by the women of the city and of all Ionia and Phrygia. Women could hold office as Presidents of Councils or as monetary magistrates, and their names figured on the coinage; inscriptions might set the wife's name before the husband's – Prisca, Jewess though she was, might be mentioned before Aquila. Daughters of the old families became in their 'teens priestesses of Artemis and, when they married, resigned the post to join that most distinguished body of well-born Ephesian matrons, the Mistresses of the Robes. Girls danced the dance of the Amazons. The young met one another freely at the great annual procession, fell in love and married. Parental consent was

expected; but, within their social order, the lovers chose their own partners. Obviously, although the dedicated girls of Aphrodite on Acrocorinthus did not upset the normal conjugal conventions of the Greeks, the respected wives and daughters of Greeks in Ionia and neighbouring Phrygia did. In their families, social custom put the women at least on an equality with their men, and sometimes a grade above them.

The great annual procession for Artemis was a ceremonial event, comparable to the great panathenaic procession for Athene in Athens; and the former was probably almost as old as the latter, both having been started in the sixth century B.C. A Greek novelist named Xenophon of Ephesus, who flourished about a century and a half after Paul, wrote a brilliant account of the procession. His story is set in earlier pre-Roman times when pirates were still a menace; but it is an extremely accurate record of local colour and Ephesian customs. The book was entitled *The Loves of Anthia and Habrocomes*; and there is much of interest in the outlines of the story so far as it concerns Ephesus.

CHAPTER I. Lycomedes and Themisto, distinguished citizens of Ephesus, had a son whom they had named Habrocomes, or 'Bushy-mop' (a word normally used of a palm-tree), superb of physique, endowed with all the virtues, clever, musical, handsome. At the age of sixteen he was enrolled, as custom ordered, in the ranks of the *epheboi*, young horsemen (like those young Athenians we see on the Parthenon frieze). But the young man had a fault; for he spurned the god of Love, declaring that never would he submit to Eros.

CHAPTER II. By contrast with this rather preposterous young paragon, the girl in the novel is enchanting. Now there came round the time for the festival of Artemis, with its splendid procession from the City to the Temple outside the walls, seven stades distant. All the local girls had to take part, splendidly adorned; and so had the newly recruited *epheboi*, who acted as escort to the treasures carried in the procession and to the girls. A mighty crowd used to attend, both citizens and

visitors; for it was the custom that, at this celebration, the girls should find husbands and the young men wives. So the procession moved along, headed by the Holy Things – such as were in the care of the Mistresses of the Robes – then torches, sacred baskets, censers, then horsemen, hunting-dogs and beaters carrying weapons of the chase. Every girl comported herself as though she were under the eyes of a future lover. Ahead of them walked Anthia – daughter of Megamedes and Euippe, citizens – and the beauty of Anthia moved all to wonder; though just fourteen years old, she far surpassed every other girl. Part of her tawny hair was tied on the crown of her head, but most of it was long and blowing in the breeze. She wore a purple *chiton*, knee-high, with a small fawn-skin over it, a quiverful of arrows, a hunting-knife, and carried a bow and spear, while her dogs followed at her heels. Often Ephesian folk, who had seen her within the grove and sanctuary of Artemis, would begin to worship, taking her to be the very goddess. And, in the procession some said that the goddess herself was present, others that she had found a twin sister. They prayed and made supplication exclaiming 'blessed are thy parents that raised thee'. Among the *epheboi* Habrocomes was equally admired. Some in the crowd were already saying 'what a couple those two would make' or 'oh, for a wedding between Habrocomes and Anthia'. These whispers are the tricks of Eros. Their eyes met, and they fell in love.

CHAPTER III. The great procession arrived at the Temple of Artemis, followed by the crowd. Habrocomes could not keep his eyes off Anthia, and she was almost sick with love. Nevertheless, she played up, as a girl will. As she moved in the ceremonial of worship she purposely bared parts of her body so that Habrocomes might see; and by this he was indeed undone and made utterly captive to the power of Eros.

CHAPTER IV-IX. Parents concur; splendid nuptials; description of wedding night.

CHAPTER X onwards. The rest need hardly detain us. In brief, the young couple started on a trip to Egypt, were

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captured by Phœnician pirates, taken to the Tyrian slave-market, sold, separated, endured many dire adventures by sea and land, only to be reunited at last and achieve a happy ending.

Historically, the description of the Ephesian procession, of the manners and customs of the people, and of the conception they had of their young goddess, is of real importance. Paul cannot have failed to witness such a procession more than once, and to have been troubled. The missionary is on firm ground so long as he can call sinners to repentance; but when he is faced with gay, carefree and healthy youth that cannot remotely imagine any sinfulness in sex, then – like those who have tried to alter the *mores* of certain Pacific islanders – he must come near despair. The root of this Ionian feminine freedom lay in social conventions adopted centuries before, when Greek colonists had accepted something from the 'Amazonian' natives of the place. But to Paul it all seemed great wickedness; and, endowed as he was with infinite courage, he dared to denounce it. His feeling came through in his letters from Ephesus to the churches of his foundation. Thus to the Corinthians he wrote:

'To the unmarried and to widows I would say this: it is an excellent thing if, like me, they remain as they are. Yet, if they cannot contain, let them marry, for it is better to marry than to burn with passion. . . .'

'Let those who have wives live as if they had none; let mourners live as though they were not mourning; let the joyful live as if they had no joy.'

'Man ought not to cover his head, for he represents the likeness and supremacy of God; but woman represents the supremacy of man. Man was not made from woman, woman was made from man; and man was not created for woman, but woman for man. Therefore, in view of the angels, woman must wear a symbol of subjection on her head. . . . Is it proper for an unveiled woman to pray to God?'

'Women must keep quiet at gatherings of the church. They are not allowed to speak; they must take a subordinate place, as the

Law enjoins. If they want any information, let them ask their husbands at home; it is disgraceful for a woman to speak in church.'

And to the Colossians: 'Wives, be subject to your husbands; that is your proper duty in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives, do not be harsh to them.'

Not thus should one speak in Ephesus, city of Artemis, Mistress of animals, Lady of the palm-tree fecund with ripe dates, Bearer of the *Diopet*, Helper and Comforter of all women. But the little apostle was great in courage; and with the passage of centuries it came to pass that his way and his commands prevailed. For some reason which is not clear, he was gaoled and wrote of his sufferings in prison. Released, he was still suspected of designs on the social order by the authorities, and hated by the successful resident Jews, who too often found themselves blamed for his anti-Ephesianism which they did not share. When he converted a number of Charlatans and book-sellers and encouraged a public *auto-da-fé* of magical books, the tradesmen of Ephesus began to look on him as a menace. By this time, he had most of the social grades, from Mistresses of the Robes to the Workers, against him; and the great riot started, organized by a man who made models of the little shrine that contained the *Diopet*. The brief account, given in the nineteenth chapter of the *Acts of the Apostles*, reads almost like a modern press-report:

A man named Demetrios, a silversmith, who made silver shrines of Artemis, brought no small gain unto the craftsmen; whom he called together with the workmen of like occupation and said, 'Gentlemen, you know that by this craft we have our wealth. Moreover, you see and hear that, not alone in Ephesus but almost through all the Province of Asia, this fellow Paul has persuaded and turned away much people, saying that those are not gods which are made with hands. Thus, not only is this craft of ours in danger of coming into disrepute, but also the temple of the great Goddess Artemis may be despised, and her magnificence may be destroyed, whom all Asia and the

civilized world worship.' And as they heard they were full of wrath, and cried out saying, 'Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!'

Then the whole city was filled with confusion and rushed with one accord to the Theatre, dragging along two Macedonians, Gaius and Aristarchos, Paul's fellow-travellers. And, when Paul would have entered in unto the people, the disciples suffered him not. And certain Asiarch officials which were his friends sent unto him desiring that he would not adventure himself into the Theatre. Some therefore cried one thing, and some another: for the meeting was confused; and the more part knew not wherefore they were come together. Then the Jews drew Alexander out of the crowd, putting him forward; and Alexander beckoned with his hand and would have made his explanation unto the people.

At this point, in all fairness, the modern reader may pause to commend Alexander. His Greek name marks him out as a Hellenizing, law-abiding Jew, profoundly resenting the activities of the revolutionary from Tarsus, and fully aware that the Jews as a whole were being blamed. In attempting to speak to the angry Ephesians, he was taking a very grave risk.

But when they knew he was a Jew (the report continues) all with one voice about the space of two hours cried out:

'Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!'

Mēgāle hē Artēmīs Ēphēsion

Mēgāle hē Artēmīs Ēphēsion

Listen to the rhythm of that chant in Greek! Meanwhile, the police sent for a very important personage, the *Grammateus tou Dēμου*; and our reporter continues:

At last when the Secretary of State had quietened the people, he said: 'Men of Ephesus, what man is there that knoweth not how that the city of the Ephesians is Temple-Warden of the great Goddess Artemis and of the "Zeus-fallen THING"? Seeing that these cannot be spoken against, you ought to be quiet and to do nothing rashly. For you have brought hither these men who are neither temple-robbers nor yet blasphemers of

your goddess. Wherefore, if Demetrios and the craftsmen which are with him have a matter against any man, the law is open and there are barristers: let them implead one-another. But, if you enquire anything concerning other matters, it shall be determined in the legal Assembly. Indeed, we are in danger to be called to account for this day's uproar, there being no cause whereby we may give a reason for this mass-meeting'. And when he had thus spoken he dismissed the assembly.

Paul, we may reflect, was lucky; the Secretary, as became a servant of the Emperor Claudius, very just. And his confidence was great. His main point seemed to him beyond all question – that Ephesus was Warden of the statue of the great Goddess Artemis, and of the Holy Object, the *Diopet*. These Jews, or this odd sect of Jews, must be made to recognize the obvious.

For once, the poor disciples of the apostle and the distinguished priestly authorities of the city seem to have worked together to get Paul away; and the guild of silversmiths was denied the opportunity of preparing an indictment against the ex-prisoner. When we bear in mind, however, the antipathy to female liberty evinced in letters written by Paul from Ephesus, and read the terse account of the Riot given in the *Acts of the Apostles*, setting it against the whole background of contemporary life and society in the great Ionian city, we may recognize the germ of a coming conflict, vast in its social and revolutionary consequences. Less than four hundred years after Paul was imprisoned for seeking the overthrow of the Establishment, the situation was entirely reversed. Eremites and Religious, defying a relatively enlightened episcopate, constituted themselves a sacred police-force, dedicated to the proposition of liquidating Paganism. In A.D. 406, a deranged person, named Demeas, had a carved inscription set up to say that he had torn 'the wily figure of the Demon Artemis from its base'. Some hunted girl-priestess probably saved the little *Diopet*, which was easy to carry away in the hand, and – with a prayer to Artemis – buried it.

Today, in the Liverpool City Museum, there is a 6½-inch stone

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pounder, cherished and adorned with rare metal in ancient times, and said, on very good authority, to have been found at Ephesus near the ancient site. The thing is an unmistakable *Diopet*, and there can hardly have been more than one in Ephesus.

SACRED AND PROFANE LOVE IN ANCIENT GREECE

CIVILIZATION, faded though it be, is for us something of Greek origin, for in its West European and American form it is derived from the ancient classical Greek, and in its Slavonic form from Byzantine Greek. Ancient Rome was only a 'middle-man' passing Hellenism over to the West; Judaea had certain contributions to make – religious and philosophical – embedded in a splendid literature. But Hellas is the fount and head of our culture, our thought, our art; not, however, of our customs. Yet the role of custom, the customary thing, doing as others do, doing what is done, is within any family, group, clan, state, or nation – civilized or uncivilized – the one thing which is able to make anything into the 'right behaviour' in the code of a Society; and breach of custom can likewise make anything into 'wrong behaviour'.

Therefore, in considering Sacred and Profane Love in ancient Greece we must disabuse our modern minds of reverence for our contemporary custom as some kind of divinely inspired authority decreed by a Creator in His ineffable rigidity. And we must endeavour not to use improperly the words 'moral' and 'morality'. Actually there are still some who think that everything which any Society does and which is 'different' from our own ways is either immoral or amoral. 'The heathen in his blindness –' we sang when I was young. But the heathen often thinks that we of the West are the blind ones. 'Immoral' has come to signify something considered evil in our sexual code of behaviour. Usage has so far deteriorated that murder, larceny, piracy, arson, malicious wounding are not looked upon as 'immoral'; they are only crimes. But any sexual act, from rape, which is truly a crime, to enthusiastic cohabitation, is classed as immorality which, in the eyes of some

persons appears worse than crime. And such persons, though their number is, we hope, diminishing, are nevertheless very influential, even though in the opinion of some, they appear to be a kind of gangrenous tail of Victorian ethics which may soon wither away.

All this has to be stated because too much of our society – haggard by a cruel and psychically debilitating code that often leads to madness or to cruel perversions – thinks itself ‘morally’ superior to the ancient world. Yet we may observe that there is in Greek art or literature no surviving evidence of sado-masochism. It seems that the Greeks did not practise sexual cruelty.

Elsewhere* I emphasized six years ago the surprising similarities and dissimilarities between ourselves and the Greeks in matters of thought, tolerance, and religion. But in matters concerning manners, customs and sexual codes of behaviour the dissimilarities were in general very much more remarkable. These dissimilarities must be faced if we are to comprehend essential facts about the Greek way of life such as do not appear in the popular and scholastic text books. Nakedness, exposure of parts or the whole of the body, was considered to be harmless. Sexual needs might be pretty freely satisfied, although excess in sexual practices, like excess in everything else, was deplored. Neither concubinage, nor lesbianism, nor male homosexuality was frowned upon. Even that which in our codes is called adultery might – under certain circumstances – be condoned. In fact ancient Greek sex-codes were not unlike those of the upper and middle classes of France, Portugal and Italy today, though in the Hellenic world there was no church to impose a nominal rule of fictitious monogamy, a rule which merely promotes hypocrisy.

The topic is obviously not an easy one to deal with in a popular book, and it may perhaps be conceded that only an ageing heterosexual extrovert, who knows that the best things in life are behind him, and who is intensely sympathetic to the difficulties, embarrassments, longings and exhilarating joys of young people, is entitled to write dispassionately about these things.

* Seltman, *The Twelve Olympians and their Guests*; Max Parrish).

Permutations in the art and practice of love are, of course, considerable and the attitude taken by ancient Greeks in different Greek lands are matters of great interest. Not only natural man, but the higher mammalia indulge their desire for physical contact and love-making in many different ways. But before proceeding further it is essential to discover what precise differences the Greeks saw between Sacred and Profane Love, since they invented this simple division into two opposites. How did they evolve this attitude to love?

Almost every Greek deity was composed of at least two different aspects, and had at least two different origins. Zeus of the Achaeans was identified with a Cretan Zeus and the myths about them were completely inconsistent. Hera was of mixed origins; Athene was a compound of Pallas and Athene; Apollo as a divine idea was probably in part of Greek, in part of Lycian origin; his sister Artemis was simultaneously the virgin Huntress and the protectress of married women. Other instances might be cited; but for the purposes of this study the most important two-fold goddess is Aphrodite.

Myths are quite important here, because they contribute in mythical, and even in mystic language things which are partially founded in some ancient historical tradition, and partially grounded in popular beliefs and customary codes.

The story of the two Aphrodites which unfolds itself is of considerable interest, while the attempt to use allegorically the second of the two of them has had almost comical consequences. But we must first learn about their separate myths. There was a collection of grisly tales now known to derive from an ancient Hurrian and Hittite civilization in Syria and Asia Minor and to have been composed about 1500 B.C. Some of these tales got into Greek myth, and a dynasty of Hittite gods named Anu, Kumarbi, and Teshub was equated with the Greek Ouranos, Kronos, and Zeus. Kumarbi attacked his father Anu and deprived him of his manhood, which, falling upon the goddess Earth, made her pregnant, and one of the children was a girl. In the Greek variant the seed of

Ouranos fell into the sea, causing foam – Greek *aphros* – from which Aphrodite was born, and she stepped on to land at Paphos in Cyprus. Thus, because she was sprung from Ouranos, who is the heavens, she was called *Ourania* or 'Heavenly' Aphrodite. This myth arose in Cyprus, an island part Phoenician, part Greek, and the Phoenicians had certainly derived much of their theology from their Hittite neighbours. The relationship of this goddess to the great female deities of the Mesopotamian and Syrian regions known as Ishtar or as Ashtoreth is self-evident. In consequence of this relationship the goddess herself is more frequently represented as naked than as clothed.

Homer, himself a member of a superior social group, knew nothing, or said nothing, about this crude mythology and so invented another parentage for the goddess, making her the daughter of Zeus and Dione; which was rather inconsistent, for those two were the most Hellenic of gods and she largely of alien origin. In addition to this, Homer called her the wife of Hephaistos and made Ares her paramour. It is only in later periods that Eros, the boy god of love, and Hermaphroditos were alleged to be her children. Within the Homeric corpus she already became what she remained till the end – the goddess of rapture. Her portion of honour among the gods, as among men, is – so Hesiod declared – 'girlish babble, and tricks; sweet rapture, embraces and caresses'. This same divine rapture, by which those who are separated find their unity in love, became later – after all odd Anatolian myths had dropped away – a great cohesive force in the philosophic view of the cosmos. She, goddess of the eternal miracle of love, alone has power to assure the peace of the world.

In Athens itself, the goddess had at least three different cults, of which the oldest took place in a cave beside which was a small garden, both of them on the north slope of the Acropolis.

Other Sanctuaries whose very existence and names had been forgotten have now been found close at hand. The North Slope must once have been a veritable garden dedicated to many rustic deities of the old religion so pointedly ignored by later

writers who scorned or were ashamed of the primitive rituals of their ancestors. Although the east part of the North Slope was known to contain many votive niches, no systematic explorations were made until 1931 when the discovery of a rock-cut inscription to Eros and Aphrodite led to the excavation of an important temenos. . . .

The sanctuary of Eros and Aphrodite was directly north of the point where the circuit wall of the Acropolis makes an acute angle northwest of the Mycenaean stairs. Beneath the niches and inscription was a terrace approached by a ramp from the *Peripatos* road. The temenos occupied most of the ground bounded on the east by the *Peripatos* inscription and on the west by a large natural outcropping of rock, and included several terraces and natural caverns. This is the first precinct found in Athens dedicated to Eros, but his mother Aphrodite seems to have been his partner in the cult. The offerings, among them a number of small phallic stones set in mortar and mounted on altars, a large marble phallos, reliefs representing reproductive organs both male and female, show that this was one of the many cults connected with fertility, and that Eros, like Adonis, was thought of as a spirit of vegetation or 'spring daimon'.*

Another sanctuary of some importance was situated on the northern slope of the Kolonos Agoraios upon which there still stands the almost perfect temple of the lame Hephaistos, formerly wrongly known as the Theseum. Travellers, standing nowadays in the great Athenian Agora and looking to the west, see this – the best preserved of any known Greek temple – standing upon a rocky hill of considerable size and appearing to represent a kind of miniature Acropolis. Only when they turn south to see the huge mass of the true Acropolis of Athene rising before them are they made aware of the extraordinary difference. At one time the Kolonos may have been a village separate from the little town of Athens which clustered round the southern slope of the Acropolis, and where the temple of Hephaistos now stands there may have been a sanctuary dedicated to him and the goddess Aphrodite,

* Ida Thallon Hill, *The Ancient City of Athens* (1933), p. 101f.

described as his wife in the early epics. By the sixth or fifth century B.C. the Kolonos and its sanctuary, now merged in the expanding city of Athens, became dedicated to the two deities especially beloved by workers like smiths and potters. Hephaistos and Athene were jointly worshipped in the temple, and Aphrodite – divorced from the lame god – moved down the same hill to the northern slope where there was built an important temple of Aphrodite, to whom the epithet Ourania was now given. Close by there was appropriately placed a small sanctuary of the Graces.

Without any doubt the most important sanctuary and temple of the goddess was that known as dedicated to Aphrodite Pandemos, a word meaning 'of all the people' and corresponding precisely to one of the titles given to Zeus, her father, who was sometimes known as Zeus Pandemos. Inscriptions, dealing with the worship of this goddess, have been found at the foot of the Nike Bastion and it seems clear that the sanctuary stood near the south-west corner of the Acropolis. One inscription dated in the fourth century is on a fragment of Pentelic marble adorned with doves and containing a dedication to Aphrodite Pandemos, 'great and holy'. Another inscription orders the magistrates on the occasion of the procession of Aphrodite Pandemos to provide a dove for the purification of the shrine, to have the altars anointed, to repair the roofs, wash the statue and furnish purple dye.

The inscriptions show that the cult of Aphrodite Pandemos was an official one, administered by respectable citizens and not by courtesans as believed by those who wished to distinguish between Aphrodite Pandemos (Vulgar or Earthly) and Aphrodite Ourania (Heavenly).*

Associated with Aphrodite in Athens, though rather vaguely, was a fourth place: 'The Gardens', a small park. This became famous for two reasons. Firstly because one of the greatest of all Greek philosophers, Epicurus, settled close to this grove. In 306 B.C. he transferred for good to his natural homeland, Athens, taking all

* *Op. cit.* p. 132.

his pupils with him. This move meant that he decided to vie with the great Schools, like the Academy, the Lyceum and the Stoa, where Plato and Aristotle had talked and Zeno preached. Financial means at the philosopher's disposal enabled him to purchase a house to which was attached a large Garden that soon became the centre and the symbol of Epicureanism.

Inevitably, there is speculation as to where in Athens the famous Garden may have been. Due south of the Acropolis and rather to the east of the Mouseion hill there was a region known in classical times as 'The Gardens', and this precinct became famous because in it there was to be seen an elegant marble statue of Aphrodite by Alcamenes, most celebrated of the pupils of Pheidias. Indeed the statue was so much admired that it was frequently copied and a number of ancient replicas still survive. It is possible that the property which Epicurus acquired, and called The Garden, abutted on the little park which held the statue of Aphrodite. Conceivably this might account for the fact that Epicureans, though dissociating themselves most deliberately from the gods in general, sympathetically treated Aphrodite as a symbol of Nature.

Evidently, four important centres of Aphrodite worship existed in Athens. Oldest the cave of a primitive fertility goddess on the north slope of the Acropolis; second the temple of Ourania, on the north side of Kolonos Agoraios; third – and most important – the shrine of 'Aphrodite of All the People' occupying a distinguished position on the south-west corner of the Acropolis. Add to these the little monument to 'Aphrodite in The Gardens', goddess of caresses and petting. Finally, it is a fair guess, but no more, that if there was a region in Athens where 'Houses', first introduced by Solon and kept by madams, were situate that region is likely to have been close to the Agora, the enormous Forum, Market, or Bazaar of ancient Athens. That is where traders and foreigners, bent on buying and selling, congregated; and that is where there would be scope for wantons to practise their particular trade. It is to be remarked that the temple of Aphrodite

most handy for the wenches to worship in was that of Aphrodite Ourania, the situation of which has already been described.

Athens, and the cult of Aphrodite in that city, have been chosen not because it was the most important Greek centre of her worship – Corinth, Paphos and Cythera were in this respect much more important – but because the rather absurd classing of Love as either Sacred or Profane originated in Athens, and in a clever parody produced by Plato.

Quite apart from the fact that Plato was, within his historical setting, the most brilliant of all philosophers and thinkers, it must not be forgotten that he was also a great artist. His power over the spoken and written word was amazing, and if he had not devoted himself to glorifying Socrates he might have been a great poet or a great dramatist, or both. A recent appreciation of his art puts the impressiveness of his work very clearly.*

In the literary form known as dramatic dialogue Plato has no rival, ancient or modern, and of all his dialogues the *Symposium* or *Dinner-party* is the most varied and the most perfectly finished. It is also the least technical of the great works of his maturity; the philosopher in Plato has not yet banished the artist and the poet, and nowhere else, save in the *Phaedo* and perhaps in the *Protagoras*, has he devoted such care to the setting in which he frames his conversation-piece. The conversation, dealing as it does with love, is itself of universal interest, but the pictures which are presented to us of Athenian social life and of the character of Socrates are almost more fascinating.

Although the dialogue was composed at a date about 385 B.C., it gives the description of an imaginary party which is supposed to have taken place in 416 B.C. Several members of the Athenian aristocracy of that time are described as being present at the Symposium, Socrates – himself no aristocrat – being the most admired of all the guests. Someone proposes that the flute-girl who was there to entertain the company should be sent away and that they should

* *Plato The Symposium*, a New Translation by W. Hamilton (Penguin Classics, 1951), p. 9.

indulge in talk which was to take the form of a speech from each of the guests in praise of Love. As the story develops it becomes clear that these members of the leisured classes of fifth-century Athens are making the assumption that the highest type of love is homosexual love; though Socrates himself, as things turn out, is concerned with a kind of sublimation of this form of love. Even this in our day is something rather difficult for most people to accept without a slight sense of aversion.

The dialogue itself is constructed with astonishing skill, the dramatic climax being reached when, each of the other guests having said his piece, Socrates gives a most brilliant exposition of his supposed views. Well before this occurs a foolish speech has to be made by one of the guests which contrasts dramatically with the master-speech which is presently to follow. A foil to the master is required. It was indeed the same in the other *Symposium* written by Xenophon in which there appears a professional funny man – a silly fool – called Philip. Plato has provided a shallow fool named Pausanias who begins by saying that they must all try to put the matter right by determining, first of all, which Love ought to be their subject, before they go on to praise him.

We all know that Aphrodite is inseparably linked with Love. If there were a single Aphrodite there would be a single Love, but as there are two Aphrodites, it follows that there must be two Loves as well. Now what are the two Aphrodites? One is the elder and is the daughter of Ouranos and had no mother; her we call Heavenly Aphrodite. The other is younger, the child of Zeus and Dione, and is called Common Aphrodite. It follows that the Love which is the partner of the latter should be called Common Love and the other Heavenly Love. Of course, I am not denying that we ought to praise all the gods, but our present business is to discover what are the respective characters of these two Loves. . . .

There can be no doubt of the common nature of the Love which goes with Common Aphrodite; it is quite random in the effects which it produces, and it is this love which the baser sort of men feel. Its marks are, first, that it is directed towards

women quite as much as young men; second, that in either case it is physical rather than spiritual; third, that it prefers that its objects should be as unintelligent as possible, because its only aim is the satisfaction of its desires, and it takes no account of the manner in which this is achieved. That is why its effect is purely a matter of chance, and quite as often bad as good. In all this it partakes of the nature of its corresponding goddess, who is far younger than her heavenly counterpart, and who owes her birth to the conjunction of male and female. But the Heavenly Aphrodite to whom the other Love belongs for one thing has no female strain in her, but springs entirely from the male, and for another is older and consequently free from wantonness. Hence those who are inspired by this Love are attracted towards the male sex, and value it as being naturally the stronger and more intelligent.*

All this, as we now know, and as every guest at the party, and every ancient Athenian knew, is silly nonsense, quite deliberately inserted by Plato with his fine dramatic instinct. No sensible person would assume that sentiments put by Shakespeare into the mouths of Malvolio, Goneril or Caliban represent the personal opinions and philosophy of Shakespeare. Yet both pedants and scholars have assumed that the religious folly – blasphemy might be a better word – put by Plato into the mouth of the foolish guest, Pausanias, are a statement by Plato of his personal views on the subject of two Aphrodites. An early pedant – Athenaeus of Naucratis, writing in the third century of our era and ignorant of ancient Athens – made this assumption; and in the modern world it has been made again all too frequently. Thus from the fatuous remarks of Pausanias – the ‘fool’ of the Symposium dialogue – there have burgeoned many crashing and nonsensical concepts. Plato himself, they keep on saying, thought ‘Heavenly’ better than ‘Profane Love’.

Historical and archaeological research have a very different tale to tell. Aphrodite Ourania, whose cult the Greeks first encount-

* Hamilton, *op. cit.*, p. 43ff.

ered in Cyprus, was worshipped on heights at Cythera, on Acrocorinthus (1,886 feet above the sea) and at Eryx in Sicily (2,465 feet up). As the 'heavenly' goddess her temples were sited as high as possible, and it was in her honour that the whole-time professional wenches practised their trade. For these dedicated and respected wantons odes were written by famous poets. But, of course, this was all completely heterosexual love-making, and all to the glory of Aphrodite Cypris, Cytherean, Corinthian, Erycinian, the heavenly Ourania.

Yet the other Aphrodite, Zeus-begotten and Dione-born, she 'of the Whole People', was also the protector of heterosexual, and perhaps especially, of married love.

The deity to whom the homosexuals turned was the boy-god Eros. This is, of course, far from precise, far from rigid. Eros was thought of as a boy-shaped god and Aphrodite as a young woman-shaped goddess; for it is usual for men and women to make in their imaginations Gods in their own likenesses. Though Christian philosophers achieve an abstract idea of ineffable Godhead, ordinary pious people assign sex to God and Christ and the Blessed Virgin Mary because they cannot think away from the linguistic compulsion of 'He' and 'She'.

For the Greeks the desire to classify into two contrasting and opposing types was an urgent one, and from this sprang the attempt of the foolish guest at the symposium to invent, not only two Aphrodites, but a separate son for each, the Ouranian Eros being naturally chosen by homosexuals as their god of love. It was Pythagoras himself who in South Italy about 530 B.C. adumbrated the famous doctrine of the duality of opposites, which was expounded in the *Metaphysics* of Aristotle. The principles could be grouped in two columns.

THE FINITE
THE ODD
THE ONE
THE RIGHT
THE MALE

THE INFINITE
THE EVEN
THE MANY
THE LEFT
THE FEMALE

RIOT IN EPHEBUS

THE MOTIONLESS	THE RESTLESS
THE STRAIGHT	THE CURVED
LIGHT	DARKNESS
GOOD	EVIL
SQUARE	OBLONG

One observes here a faint trace of antifeminism since the male is placed in the same column with the Straight, Light and Good, while the female is in the other column along with the Curved, Darkness and Evil. However, the reference is to the male and the female principle, not necessarily to men and women. Yet we may not forget that the Pythagoreans were partly under the influence of certain Oriental concepts and in the Middle East there were already a few scattered monastic-like bodies who automatically expressed fear of sex such as is common to all monasticism through the ages. In the days of Socrates and Plato, that is in the fifth and fourth centuries B.C., a certain tendency to Pythagoreanism still existed and exercised some influence even down to the days of Aristotle. The scientist, who was already present in every thinking Greek, doted on classification.

Love, in fact, is and has always been infinitely complicated. Satisfaction of hunger and sexual desire are the two chief urges in life. If hunger comes first that is because people cannot enjoy sexual release when they are starving; neither can animals. But, given a not too empty stomach, sex in some form or other at certain variable periods becomes dominant even though it may show itself through greatly varied means of expression. Therefore, to divide it, in simplicity, into two Loves, 'Sacred and Profane' as a few Greeks did, and many Christians have since done, fails to make sense. The very word 'love' has so great a range of meanings. Not long ago an egregious, inhibited, non-Liverpudlian bigot made bitter complaint to the City Corporation because a friendly bus-conductress, wanting to know where he wished to get off the bus, asked him, 'Where to, luv?' Not being a native of Liverpool he was unable to perceive that locally 'luv' is equivalent to 'sir', or 'madam'. At the other end of the scale we cannot do

better than to turn to the Old Testament and to the 'Song of Songs'.*

Behold, thou art fair, my love; behold, thou art fair;
 Thou hast doves' eyes within thy locks:
 Thy lips are like a thread of scarlet,
 And thy speech is comely:
 Thy temples are like a piece of pomegranate
 Within thy locks.
 Thy two breasts are like two young roes that are twins,
 Which feed among the lilies.
 How much better is thy love than wine!
 And the smell of thy body than all spices!
 Thy lips, O my spouse, drop as the honeycomb:
 Honey and milk are under thy tongue;
 And the smell of thy garments is like the smell of Lebanon.
 A garden enclosed is my sister, my spouse;
 A spring shut up, a fountain sealed.
 Thy plants are an orchard of pomegranates, with pleasant fruits:
 Camphire, with spikenard,
 Spikenard and saffron;
 Calamus and cinnamon, with all trees of frankincense;
 Myrrh and aloes, with all the chief spices:
 A fountain of gardens,
 A well of living waters,
 And streams from Lebanon.
 O prince's daughter!
 The joints of thy thighs are like jewels,
 The work of the hands of a cunning workman.
 Thy navel is like a round goblet,
 Which wanteth not liquor:
 Thy belly is like an heap of wheat
 Set about with lilies.
 Thy two breasts are like two young roes
 That are twins.
 Thy neck is as a tower of ivory;

* As arranged by Sir James Frazer, see *Poetica Erotica*, New York, 1927, p. 4ff.
 Only some excerpts are given.

RIOT IN EPHESUS

Thine eyes like the fishpools in Heshbon, by the gate of
Bathrabbim:
How fair and how pleasant art thou,
O love, for delights!
This thy stature is like to a palm tree,
And thy breasts to clusters of grapes.
I said, I will go up to the palm tree,
I will take hold of the boughs thereof:
Now also thy breasts shall be as clusters of the vine,
And the smell of thy skin like apples;
And the roof of thy mouth like the best wine for my beloved,
That goeth down sweetly,
Causing the lips of those that are asleep to speak.

Within the early Greek mode of thought Love was usually deified as Eros, or as his mother Aphrodite, though the word *aphrodite* – with a small initial – had a tendency to mean sexual desire and union. But even before the Hellenistic age new words for Love were passing into common usage; and when a learned body of seventy Greek-speaking Jews made, in Alexandria in the reign of Ptolemy II (308–246 B.C.), a translation – known as the *Septuagint* – of the Old Testament and the Apocrypha into Greek, for the benefit of Greek converts to Judaism, they could not express Love by employing the names of Greek pagan gods. Therefore in their translation they used the Greek word *agapé*. Throughout the 'Song of Songs' in the *Septuagint* version 'my love' and 'my beloved' are generally rendered by *agapé*, or by a form of the word. That splendid poem is a bridal song for lovers, therefore the word is used to denote love between husband and wife; and the same usage occurs in Jeremiah (2, 2): 'I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals.'

When the epistles of the New Testament were being written the word *agapé* assumes a somewhat different appearance and is used for the love of God to man. 'God commendeth His love towards us'. (Epistle to the Romans 5, 8.) At about the same time the word begins to be used to denote a kind of benevolence – a

very abstract type of love – of mankind towards mankind. It is, at its best, expressed by Paul of Tarsus in his first Letter to the Corinthians classified in the Authorised Version as Chapter 13. This magnificent poem, only second in Holy Writ to the 'Song of Songs' is for us slightly marred by archaic use of the word Charity, which, as a convenient translation of the Latin word *caritas*, may have given a correct impression in the days of King James VI and I, but which has an unfortunate and patronizing connotation in our own day. Since the Greek word which Paul used is much better translated as 'love' it is today most desirable to leave the rest of the chapter in the Authorised Version intact, but to change 'charity' to 'love', because the Greek word which Paul employed was *agapé*. Familiar though it is to Christians and to others interested in the ancient world a few verses may be quoted from the poem.

Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not Love,
 I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.
 And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge;
 Though I have all Faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not Love,
 I am nothing.
 Love suffereth long, and is kind,
 Love envieth not,
 Love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up,
 Beareth all things, believeth all things,
 Hopeth all things, endureth all things.
 Love never faileth:
 But whether there be prophecies, they shall fail;
 Whether there be tongues, they shall cease,
 Whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away.
 For we know in part, and we prophesy in part.
 But when that which is perfect is come;
 Then that which is in part shall be done away.
 For now we see through a glass, darkly;
 But then face to face:

Now I know in part;
But then shall I know even as also I am known.
And now abideth Faith, Hope, Love, these three;
But the greatest of these is Love.

Another word begins to take on a great importance in the New Testament – the word *epithumia*, derived from the verb *thuo* – the original meaning of which implies a kind of seething or storming or panting with desire. From this came the word *thumos* which began to mean soul as shown by feelings and passions and then the mind or the heart as the seat from which these emotions appeared to come. Desire was presently expressed by the word *epithumia*, which in Classical and Hellenic times often meant sexual desire, although the word was not used in any pejorative sense. Yet by the time that the gospels were written down the word was used in two very different senses. In Luke 22, 15 when Christ was instituting the Lord's Supper he sat down with the twelve apostles and said, 'With desire have I desired to eat this Passover with you'. And the word is *epithumia*. As a contrast we may compare Paul's *Epistle to the Romans* (7, 7) 'Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin but by the law. For I had not known *lust* except the law had said "Thou shalt not *lust*".' Here the word translated as *lust* is the Greek *epithumia*. The same applies in the *Second Epistle to Timothy*, 2, 22: 'Flee also youthful *lusts*'; and for the *Epistle to Titus* 2, 12: 'Denying ungodliness and worldly *lusts*'.

Other early epistles of non-Pauline origin that employ *epithumia* in a similar sense are James I, 'Every man is tempted when he is drawn away by his own *lust* and enticed. Then, when *lust* hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin.' and I Peter (2, 11): 'I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly *lusts*.' Finally, one may cite the use of the word *epithumia* in I John 2, 16: 'All that is in the world, the *lust* of the flesh, and the *lust* of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father.'

It is impossible to avoid perception of the direction into which all this was leading mankind. Deep feeling and emotion from man to woman, or from woman to man, had become wickedness. The

cult of chastity assumed a vast importance, which was to give birth to the dangerous repressions of monasticism. And when the raving monks of the desert tore Hypatia to pieces with oyster shells, symbols of Aphrodite, they were merely letting loose their *libido* in the most repulsive way possible.

Hypatia, the daughter of Theon the mathematician, was initiated in her father's studies; her learned comments have elucidated the geometry of Apollonius and Diophantus, and she publicly taught, both at Athens and Alexandria, the philosophy of Plato and Aristotle. In the bloom of beauty and in the maturity of wisdom, the modest maid refused her lovers and instructed her disciples; the persons most illustrious for their rank or merit were impatient to visit the female philosopher; and Cyril beheld, with a jealous eye, the gorgeous train of horses and slaves who crowded the door of her academy. On a fatal day, in the holy season of Lent, Hypatia was torn from her chariot, stripped naked, dragged to the church, and inhumanly butchered by the hands of Peter the Reader and a troop of savage and merciless fanatics: her flesh was scraped from her bones with sharp oyster shells, and her quivering limbs were delivered to the flames.*

Dislike of women, arising from a few Pauline feelings and maxims, began to take on a sinister pattern, in itself a complete contrast to the benevolent friendliness towards women shown by Jesus Christ.

Tertullian, Chrysostom, Augustine, and other eminent churchmen began to regard love as equivalent to lust. Long after Christendom – and with it the dominance of the Priesthood – became effective, the Church still had an uphill fight to establish its hatred of sex and women, but in the end, of course, it gained its bitter way. Of all its enemies the most resistant was the barbarian feudal nobility, whether of Saxon, Norman, or Frankish origin; and they were in some respects not unlike the more brilliant Greeks of the Heroic Age.

* Edward Gibbon, *Decline and Fall* (World's Classics), Vol. V, p. 130f.

THE RULER-CULT FROM ALEXANDER OF MACEDON TO ELIZABETH I OF ENGLAND

CULT is a word of several meanings and of wide application; but it seems reasonable to define it as something half-way between respect and worship. Respect may be offered to a variety of persons, especially perhaps to successful men. Worship may be given to God; likewise to Devil; or to a man who sets himself up as a god or is feared as a devil, since there is often a slight – and sometimes a large – element of appeasement in worship. But the essence of a cult is that its subject should be a *good* man – good by human standards and, therefore, a Humanist.

Ruler-Cult as an historical phenomenon is rare, and not to be confused with a piece of state-mechanism, like emperor-worship, nor with the religio-political theory of divine kingship. It requires the presence of a *good* human being who, to large numbers of people, seems to have qualities that put him nearer to God or the gods than do the qualities of other contemporary mortals. It flourishes when the foundations of traditional belief have been badly shaken or have crumbled away, for then it is that mankind, being unhappy without an unquestioned religion, seeks something good and human to venerate – that is to say, it seeks a humanist attachment. In a faith-faint age, a nation or people able to find a truly good ruler is exceptionally fortunate; for history shows that such men are rare; that crises of religious disillusionment are infrequent, and that the man, the hour and the need only occasionally coincide. Thus, it may happen that Ruler-Cult in its purest state is altogether admirable and healthy. But more than a mere drift by the masses towards an agnostic fatalism is needed to supply an emotional climate that favours the Cult. The need for this human outlet becomes greatest when long-accepted myths, genealogies, and

dogmas propagated by the guardians of religion, become meaningless and collapse because new knowledge has made faith in them untenable.

Let us consider some instances. In the sixth and fifth centuries B.C. the Greeks – with the exception of a small group of early Ionian scientists – believed in the gods and often put their trust in them. Zeus, Apollo and Athene were Saviour-gods of the Athenian city state who brought about the adventurous expansion of Hellenism and the miraculous defeat of the barbarians. Aphrodite, Artemis and Hermes could be trusted to help mortals in their personal troubles; women relied on Hera, sailors on Poseidon, artists on Hephaistos. Even the unpopular Ares had his votaries in the many soldiers of fortune who roamed the classical world; and, for men and women whose temperaments turned them towards mysticism, both Demeter and Dionysos were there to be adored. The Twelve Olympians were firmly set in the hearts of men. Yet by the fourth century, much of this was changed; for, while belief in the personal Helper-gods and goddesses remained, most men were losing faith in the Saviour-gods. The sunny future that the defeat of Persia had seemed to promise Hellas was eclipsed by inter-state wars, civic faction, political corruption, and the failure of democracy. No really big classical temple was built after the Parthenon, except for the Ephesian Artemision, and this was only a rebuilding occasioned by a fire. The Sophists and Socrates undermined the ancient faith, as is apparent from *The Clouds* of Aristophanes, performed in 423 B.C. Plato's high-minded philosophy was grasped only by an enlightened few, and his almost 'Christian' concept of God merely served, for the many, to draw godhead into incomprehensibility. Politics and philosophy together had achieved a disintegration of much belief, and offered nothing to put in its place. Where was the good to be found? In the dialogue called *The Phaedo*, Plato, in quest of the clear truth, faces the extreme difficulty of its attainment:

A man must take whatever human doctrine is best and hardest to disapprove, and, embarking upon it as upon a raft, sail upon

it through life in the midst of dangers, unless he can sail more safely and securely upon some stronger vessel: – the word of a godlike man.

In every walk of life the Greeks began to feel the need for such a godlike man; and it was fulfilled in the person of Alexander. History has naturally placed most emphasis on Alexander the Conqueror, the military genius. He was both; but, ever since the brilliant researches of Sir William Tarn, we have begun to perceive that these aspects were almost incidental and of far less importance than his achievements as explorer, civilizer, humanizer and unifier of mankind. In 334 B.C., when he crossed into Asia, he fought one battle in which he beat the Persian satraps. Thereafter his road from Hellespont to Lebanon was the route of a liberator, and all the rulers of Cyprus hastened to join him. In Phoenicia he was obliged to exert force against Tyre because he was championing the Greek cause against the age-old rivals of Hellas. To Egypt he came as liberator and uniter of two great civilizations. When the empire of Darius was ended by Alexander's victory at Gaugamela, and after the occupation of the four capitals – Susa, Persepolis, Pasargadae, Ecbatana – the Graeco-Macedonian simply replaced the Persian dynasty; and, in the event, this new and more enlightened rule was wholly beneficent to the native population, among whom there gradually grew the cult of that now legendary figure, 'Iskander of the Two Horns', divinely good like the archangels of Allah. From Persia onwards Alexander's expedition to the East, terminating in North-west India and the Punjab, was a scientific exploration of a characteristically Greek type, bent on the accumulation and recording of knowledge. In this long expedition, only twice was opposition encountered, since he and his Greeks and Macedonians were almost everywhere welcome. The opposition, indeed, brought reconciliation and union; for the campaign against the Sogdians culminated in the romance of a love-marriage between Alexander and Roxane, and the struggle against the Indian Porus, famed for his brigade of elephants, ended in pledges of enduring friendship.

Especially characteristic of Alexander were his complete indifference to his own well-being and his devotion to the service of mankind. These are the central factors that dominated his life and which hostile and spiteful persons, both in his lifetime and later, endeavoured to conceal. A 'History of Detraction' will probably never be written, because it would be a dismal tale of fools and psychopaths. Human folly is often such that it is easier to forgive a man for being great than for being good; for to deny greatness is to endanger your own reputed judgment, whereas, without risk, you can pick on weaknesses, start rumours, invent scandals, spread lies in an attempt to undermine the good; and in the ancient world such attempts were much rougher and louder than they are today when the law concerns itself with libel and slander. A favourite method in the Hellenistic age was for traducers to attack an enemy with lies about his private life, intending to rouse either the jealousy or scorn of other men. Many Peripatetics and Stoics thought to discredit Alexander's memory by accusations of promiscuous excess. Some among Alexander's detractors raised a third accusation – continence akin to neurotic impotence – surely in the ancient world the most unkindest cut of all! But Plutarch in his *Life of Alexander* carries evidence to refute so odd a notion. A second line of attack laid emphasis on his unsuccessful attempt to introduce the eastern habit of prostration in the Royal Presence for Greeks and Macedonians, as well as for Orientals with whom it was customary; though it is likely that this suggestion first came, shortly after the marriage, from the beautiful Roxane, with whom Alexander was infatuated. Thirdly, he was blamed for encouraging, or allowing, his friends in Greek cities to have him declared a god. But it is now clear that this was a religio-political manoeuvre to give the King of Macedon status in any Greek city whereof he was not a citizen, and it amounted to no more than a kind of 'naturalization from above'. Even in Athens, the most brilliant of them all, this caused little resentment, except among an embittered minority, and the Athenians set up on the Acropolis a marble statue by the celebrated sculptor Leochares,

one of the finest works of the time. The head of this statue – the only extant contemporary life-size portrait of Alexander – survives.

When we separate, as Tarn has done, the hostile from the friendly histories of Alexander the Great, we begin to understand the extent of his self-dedication to the service of humanity. Between the political philosophies of Plato, Isocrates and Aristotle on the one hand, and of Zeno and the Stoics on the other, there is an unbridged gap. This was filled by what Tarn calls the 'action-philosophy' of Alexander, which endeavoured to work upon an idea that had three closely interconnected aspects. The first was that God was the common Father of mankind, which may be called the concept of the brotherhood of man; the second, that the various races of mankind should become of one mind together and live in concord; the third, that the various peoples of his empire might be partners in the realm, rather than subjects. And the keynote of the whole was the Greek conception of *Homonoia*, meaning 'being of one mind together', which was to become the expression of the world's longing for something better than everlasting wars. Plutarch says that Alexander's expedition was no raid to plunder and destroy; 'rather he wished to show that all earthly things were subject to one *logos* and one polity, and that all men were one people.' This is why there grew up for the first time in history a true Ruler-Cult, and accounts for the gigantic impression that Alexander made upon the world. And this is why, to quote Tarn,

more than eighty versions of the Alexander-romance, in twenty-four languages, have been collected, some of them the wildest fairy-tales; they range from Britain to Malaya. No other story in the world has spread like his. . . . All the countries claimed him as theirs. In Persian story he became the son of Ochus . . . in Egyptian the son of the last native Pharaoh. In Jewish legend he was the Two-horned, the precursor of the Messiah; and as Dhulcarnein, the Two-horned, he became one of the heroes of Islam. The Bedouin thought that Napoleon was

Iskander come again; in France he ended as a knight of chivalry, in Abyssinia as a Christian saint.

Alexander did not assume that he was a god; but, believing in some mystical revelation vouchsafed at Siwa in the desert and in the words of the Oracle there, he thought that he was a Son of God – the Libyan Ammon whom Greeks identified with Zeus. Ancient states and rulers frequently used their coinage as a far-ranging vehicle for propaganda, making the coins tell, by the pictures on them, the kind of story that they wished their subjects to accept. The first coinage of the king's greatest foundation – Alexandria by Egypt – bears on the obverse Alexander's portrait, the head covered in a lion-scalp, and on the reverse the enthroned figure of the Father-god Zeus. People remembered that another, though legendary, son of Zeus, the hero Herakles, had for ages been similarly represented in art with lion-scalp upon his head. Thirty years after his death Alexander was generally regarded as a god who had joined the Immortals, and he appears as such on coins which were struck by one of his cavalry generals, Lysimachus. Here he is the 'Two-horned' like his father Zeus – Ammon, from whose forehead there spring the horns of a ram. The strength and reality of a cult given to a good ruler are often revealed by something that comes from the deep feelings of the people. Alexander's people were the army – his veterans – who, broken with grief at their loss, filed silently through the sick-room where the young king lay dying to take their last farewell. It happened in Babylon in the summer of 323 B.C. in his thirty-third year.

The cult of Alexander led to a revival among Greeks of religious belief; for to have seen and heard a son of God on earth strengthened faith in gods. This is not always understood; yet it is improbable that Olympian religion could have endured for six or more centuries had it been paralysed under Alexander and the great successors. His son by Roxane was murdered at the age of fourteen; but, before that event, an 'apostolic' succession of rulers was already emerging, as the famous generals began to found new

dynasties; the Ptolemies, Seleucids, Antigonids and lesser Houses. On the propaganda coinages issued by these monarchs, figures of Zeus, Apollo and Athene – the Saviour-gods – far out-numbered those of other deities, and the building of new and splendid temples was resumed. Ruler-Cult of a kind was given to many of these kings, but it was often of a superficial and formalized type; not a mass-emotion swinging up from the hearts of the people, such as had been given to Alexander. Clearly there was no longer the sense of bitter disillusionment that the fourth century had revealed, for the Hellenistic world had become relatively stable. Two good rulers stand out, however, who, besides saving their subjects from impending troubles, deserved well of their people because they provided interesting additions to the theory of kingship. The first was Antigonus 'the knock-kneed' of Macedon (277 to 239 B.C.) – a philosopher king devoted to the precepts and beliefs of the Stoics, who was probably the first ruler to say 'kingship is a glorified servitude'. The second was Antiochus IV, king of Syria, who adopted the resounding style 'Antiochus, King, God Manifest, Bearer of Victory'. These appellatives, though definite to our ears, were originally rather vague. From Homeric times Greeks regarded certain individuals as more than human. *Theioi* (divine) – not *Theoi* (gods) – with more or less qualifications. As A. D. Nock has pointed out:

Such an individual might be called a god, either unreservedly or with reference to yourself, a *god to you*. If you recognized in him the essential characteristics of a particular god, you might call him that god, again either unreservedly or with reference to yourself.

The royal use of *Epiphanes*, or 'Manifest', only refers, as the same scholar has maintained, to the making of sudden 'epiphanies', appearances in person or manifestations of power. It was probably when King Antiochus IV was successfully invading Egypt in 170 B.C. that his propaganda coins with these titles first appeared. As a contribution to the theory of kingship, this usage puts fresh

emphasis upon the extraordinary value to his people of a ruler's personal appearance among them.

As one Mediterranean nation after another seeking Rome's protection or provoking her resentment became incorporated, the Roman Republic had slowly, unwittingly and unwillingly acquired Empire. Never in history, except perhaps during the Spanish conquest of South America, was there such opportunity for oppression, rapine, enrichment and corruption. By 70 B.C. the situation was appalling, and beyond cure even by men of comparative integrity like Cicero. Then came the clash of Civil War; Caesar against Pompey, Caesar against the Senate, followed by a breathing-space of peace under the great *Julius Caesar Dictator Perpetuus Pontifex Maximus Parens Patriae*. Salvation for harassed humanity was in sight, and the force of circumstance was thrusting upon Caesar, not Ruler-Cult, but divine kingship, the claim to which lay in his direct descent from Iulus, Aeneas, and thus from Aphrodite herself. Then came Caesar's murder on the fatal Ides of March, and the returning horrors of a yet more desperate Civil War: Octavius – Caesar's grand-nephew and adopted son – against Antony and Cleopatra. Even the propaganda coinage struck by both sides helps to give a picture of the agony of the civilized world; for, amid this long-enduring turmoil in Rome, as formerly in Greece, the foundations of belief had given way. At last, in 31 B.C., came the sea-fight at Actium which ushered in a peace that saved the world. It was after this victory that Octavius, taking the name of Caesar Augustus, devoted his life to the restoration of the State and the Empire, to the complete reform of religion, the administration and the law, and to the service of humanity. He had long been known as *Princeps*, or temporal head of the State, when in 12 B.C. he also became the Supreme Pontiff, the spiritual head; and it is as such that he figures, wearing a short-sleeved Greek *chiton* under his voluminous toga, in a marble statue found in 1910 by Roman archaeologists. For the Greek half of the empire, however, upon gold coins struck somewhere in Greece or Ionia, he was presented after another fashion – in the guise of a

Hellenistic Ruler, as remarkable, in his own way, for good looks as had been Alexander. From Spain to Syria, and from the Rhine to the Nile, the peoples of that huge empire gave him gratitude and love, expressed through a well-established Cult of the Ruler. It is true enough, as F. E. Adcock wrote, that

the assemblage of qualities and capacities that made up his personality are not such as to strike the imagination of the world. In the sense that Alexander, Caesar or Napoleon surpassed other men in intellectual equipment, Augustus cannot be counted a man of genius. That he was not: he was the man that the world needed, and may claim to have been one of the greatest servants of the human race.

He could ask no higher praise than the tribute he happened to receive shortly before his death from the crew of a ship he met off Puteoli, when the sailors cried out that it was through Him that they were alive, through Him that they sailed the seas, through Him that they enjoyed liberty and fortune.

The course of history after Augustus's death was not unlike that following the death of Alexander, though in this instance the empire continued as a single unit; and, despite the brief presence in the purple of an occasional tyrant or madman, the life of the ordinary citizens of the empire remained fairly stable and free from any shattering sense of disillusionment. For the gradually increasing army of Christians, life held perils, disasters and, at times, the happy crown of martyrdom. But, even when Olympian religion derived its main support from the educated nobility and gentry of the empire, even when Constantine was establishing the new faith as a State religion, Christianity was, in fact, the religion of a minority – although in process of transformation into the religion of a majority. With its establishment there came a complete change of the relation between ruler and people. The Asiatic concept of kingly power, such as Xerxes would have imposed on Europe in 480 B.C. had he won the Persian Wars, was now imposed by Constantine. The Ruler was no longer the god-like servant of his

people or the benefactor of humanity, but one who held his kingly powers as a servant of God above, whom alone it was his duty to consider. This was a turning-point in world history; and Constantine, by sitting among the assembled bishops at the Council of Nicaea, ushered in what was eventually to become the medieval world of Europe. It is no wonder that the last of the famous classical poets, Ammianus, described him as *Turbator rerum*, 'the Revolutionary'.

The ethic of the Christian Church commanded men both to look towards spiritual needs and heavenly prospects, and to disdain temporal desires and earthly amenities. In theory all men should look forward only to the after-life, for which mundane life, were it magnificent or squalid, was but a preparation; and all men should hope for the vision of their Redeemer. His Vicar in Rome, as the sole human being styled 'Holiness', was deserving of cult, not as a man, but by virtue of his office as Supreme Pontiff. Furthermore, the fact that hosts of the dead became, in the guise of saints and martyrs, objects of cult served as another barrier against the recurrence of that splendid devotion which their subjects once gave to an Alexander or an Augustus. Orthodoxy was now more needful than kindness, heresy far worse than cruelty. The belief in universal sin made search for a good man seem futile, since only God was good; and Humanism wilted in face of the doctrine of man's worthlessness. Human activities that had formerly appeared as follies or as pastimes were classed anew as deadly sins; mortification of the flesh became the road to salvation; and the ever-present fear of Hell was a useful deterrent from deviation or spiritual rebellion. For some twelve centuries, the foundations of belief remained stable throughout most of Europe, and no need was felt to discover in any sovereign that self-devotion to mankind which could have encouraged some form of Ruler-Cult. On a pure and austere level, the ideal Christian was intended to be ruled by these laws of conduct, preached by countless puritans in the early and medieval Church. Every generation, nevertheless, must have included many inarticulate men who passed their lives in their own

quiet way, unregimented by dogmas and unenslaved by obsession with sin. This was especially true in Mediterranean lands, which never quite shed the gentle simplicities of tolerant religion. Sicily with its remarkable mixed population – Greek, Phoenician and Saracen – was one land where ancient ways lingered long, as has only recently been proved by the discovery at Piazza Armerina in the heart of the island of a great country house, rich in splendid mosaics, the home of a line of wealthy landed noblemen from about A.D. 350 to 1070, when the Normans invaded Sicily. It is safe to infer that they were people of the earlier faith; for the mosaics are entirely pagan, and the remains of the house contain no Christian indications whatsoever. Pagans, after all, are but *pagani*, 'country folk', who kept close to nature and the older gods; whereas Christianity, with its need of a communal life and of handsome churches, was more nearly urban. Sicily, moreover, provided a further link with the ancient world in the person of the only great pagan sovereign of the Middle Ages, the Emperor Frederick II, who travelled his empire with a harem like the Persian King of Kings, held court like a Hellenistic monarch, and minted gold like a Roman emperor. Grandson and son of the Emperors Frederick I Barbarossa and Henry VI, King of Sicily by inheritance through his Norman mother, he was crowned at Palermo in 1198 at the age of four, but contrived to spend part of his boyhood in unregal liberty in the company of coeval Sicilian urchins. When, although under papal excommunication, he crowned himself King of Jerusalem in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in 1229, he shook the medieval world, which was already bewildered by his brilliance, licence and liberal learning. But even a king and emperor of his stature must in the end succumb under the sustained pressure of a vast ecclesiastical machine.

Yet, among his mother's people in the South and his father's in the North, Frederick II came nearer than any other medieval prince to receiving Ruler-Cult. The ill-will which he aroused, both in Rome and in Lombardy, was offset by the love obtained

from his Sicilian and Apulian subjects on the one hand, and from the Germans on the other. The contrast was notable; for in the South he was hailed as the 'Wonder of the World' – *Stupor Mundi* or *Thauma Kosmon* among his Latin- and Greek-speaking subjects; while the North enshrined him in the Barbarossa legend. It was said that he did not die, but fell asleep in a deep mountain cavern in Germany, seated at a table of stone, through the top of which his ever-lengthening beard forced its fern-like path. One day he was to rise, return and restore the Holy Roman Empire to prosperity. Since one who, in his lifetime, had been a dangerous 'revolutionary from above' ought not to be held in affectionate memory, the fairy tale of the sleeping Emperor – Saviour to be – was thrust back in time and applied to an earlier and more obedient Kaiser, Frederick I, a red-head like his famous and dangerous grandson. But it must not be forgotten that the Sicilian childhood of Frederick II had linked him to the Classical past, without which neither the Renaissance nor the Reformation could have achieved their potent transformations.

Given the right circumstances and in an appropriate emotional climate, the Renaissance was calculated to promote a revival of something like ancient Ruler-Cult; and such a revival actually occurred in England, mainly as a consequence of the Wars of the Roses. Elimination of the old nobility by a process of mutual slaughter, and the gradual transformation of a squirearchy into a new aristocracy, had certain political advantages; but it proved disturbing to the people as a whole. Even more so was the gradual suppression – which was already starting under Henry VII – of monastic bodies. Two of the chief stabilizers of the medieval social order were eradicated; and, in their stead, the most spiritually satisfying gift offered to the people by Henry VIII was the Open Bible. On the credit side, however, there was also the influence of Erasmus who, with his wise preference for the middle way, unwittingly prepared for the Anglican compromise; and to his denunciation of monastic orders he added a new hope of rebirth when he brought the full flood of the Renaissance to England.

The Praise of Folly, written in 1509 during a visit to Thomas More in London, and first published in Paris in 1511 at the time when Erasmus was living in Cambridge at Queens' College,* enthralled the enlightened world and quickly ran into many editions. Although his most famous work denounced the weaknesses of the Church of Rome, Erasmus was no friend of Luther and Calvin, those champions of original sin. In fact, *The Praise of Folly* shook off the last fetters of medievalism by substituting 'foolish' for 'sinful' mankind – a point of view not unlike that of the first British heretic, Pelagius; and herein lay a return to a kind of pagan philosophy with which enlightened Anglicanism had always had affinities.

In the sixteenth century, as today, it seems probable that the two peoples most given to producing rugged individualists were the French and English. Both submit to authority on the impulse of necessity only, not from inclination. Hence, just as a trend towards disobedience comes naturally to the French, so does a tendency to heresy come naturally to the English. From 1485 to 1558, England endured a ferment of spiritual disillusionment which touched its nadir in the fires of Smithfield, while 'Mary's last years passed in a sombre gloom illuminated' – the phrase is Osbert Lancaster's – 'only by the dull glow of flickering Protestants'. To Englishmen of that day the world probably seemed an even more desperately hopeless place than it had seemed to Greeks and Romans just before the emergence of Alexander and of Augustus. Elizabeth I, at that hour, was the very Prince whom England needed. Though coronation made her titular Head of her Church, she was completely indifferent to all questions of theological controversy, an attitude she retained throughout her life. Her conception of sovereignty differed entirely from that held by all her predecessors; indeed, she went back to the ideas of Augustus, feeling herself to be almost the servant of the people – certainly their guardian. As Virgin Queen, she may be said literally to have sacrificed herself for the people's sake; since, on two occasions at least,

* This essay has been written in the rooms which Erasmus occupied.

she would probably have accepted a matrimonial alliance had not her half-sister's dreadful example convinced her of the danger in which she might put her subjects by contracting any marriage. The greatness and glory of the Elizabethan age are her enduring monument; and she early became the subject of Ruler-Cult in the ancient sense. Much can be learnt from the comparison of two works of art – neither of which is a mere piece of courtly flattery – the *Gemma Augustea* in Vienna, and the painting by Hans Eworth at Hampton Court Palace. Augustus, as Jupiter, sits beside *Dea Roma* among the gods; Elizabeth, the new Juno, outshines the goddesses between whom Paris had found it so difficult to adjudicate. Think what we may of Gloriana and her Court, we know that she always made her 'epiphanies' or appearances in person at the well-timed moment, and that she was a woman of genius, with an uncanny gift for refraining from action precisely when inaction was the wisest policy. There can be no doubt that she was the first English sovereign to hold the love of the vast majority of her people, to whom her outstanding quality appeared to be a true personal goodness, and for whom she had really earned the popular epithet of 'Good Queen Bess'. These memorable words, from her last address to the Commons, form a worthy summing-up:

My heart was never set upon any worldly goods, but only for my subjects' good. To be a king and wear a crown is a thing more glorious to them that see it than it is pleasant to them that bear it. . . . And, though you have had and may have many mightier and wiser princes sitting in this seat, yet you never had nor shall have any love you better.

PYTHAGORAS: ARTIST, STATESMAN, PHILOSOPHER

THREE large and important Greek islands lie close to the coast of Asia Minor. Lesbos, Chios, and Samos – the last, which is the smallest, being only slightly bigger than the Isle of Wight. The Greek island is about twenty-seven miles long and fourteen miles wide; the Isle of Wight measures twenty-three by thirteen miles. Samos has had a lively history, filled with the actions of highly individualistic people. When Anatolian powers threatened, as they so often did, Samos always found itself closest to the danger zone; for a narrow strait, no more than one mile wide, separates the island from the mainland. In ancient times, it was more prosperous than it is today, although it still produces olive oil, raisins, cotton, tobacco, and great quantities of Samian wine. As long ago as the seventh and sixth centuries B.C., there were large flocks of sheep on the island. Samian wool, like its wine and oil, was famous.

Relatively small as the island is, it has been the home, over the centuries, of a number of remarkable men. Kolaïos – the first Greek to get through to the Atlantic – famous engineers, architects, sculptors and engravers lived and worked there in the sixth century, as well as poets like Ibycus and Anacreon; and it was in that same century that Samos produced a 'tyrant', or despot, second only in fame to the Athenian Peisistratus. Polycrates, who gained control over many islands in the Aegean Sea surrounding Samos, raised his state for a time to a height of power that, so long as he lived, made it seem to be the most influential of all the Greek islands.

Enduring fame is something that contemporaries can rarely predict. Certainly, neither the despot himself nor the circle of brilliant

men who surrounded him could have foreseen that the most famous Samian in all history was to be the son of a gem-engraver named Mnesarchos – Pythagoras, who, in his later years, became the celebrated founder of the Pythagorean Brotherhoods. He has been appraised as an outstanding genius; but even a man of genius at the highest level is bound to be partly conditioned by his background; and for that reason it is worth examining the island realm of Samos and the remarkable people who lived there during the sixth century B.C., and whose lives and actions must have influenced the sage.

Restless energy, throughout most of their history, was natural to these islanders. Well before 600 B.C., Kolaïos was the first Greek to discover Tartessus – known to Phoenicians and Hebrews as Tarshish – an ancient tidal Iberian port in the Atlantic Ocean, at the mouth of the Guadalquivir, which traded bar-silver for luxury goods from the East. Samian wool, wine and metal-work were even then attaining popularity. Contacts with Phoenicians and Greeks had produced among the Tartessians a civilization far higher than that of other Iberians; and they had learnt to build ocean-going coastal vessels, which voyaged as far as Ireland and Britain in their quest for gold and tin. Indeed, should ever a sixth-century Samian work of art turn up in the south of England, it would occasion no surprise. Kolaïos himself became famous on account of the great wealth of the cargo he brought back from Spain; and his exploit encouraged other merchant venturers among his compatriots. Enterprising seamen as they were, they displayed a tendency, not always popular, to combine the calling of privateer and pirate with that of trader; and practices such as these led to a certain ruthlessness at home as well as on the high seas.

Members of the old and noble families, who were landowners in the island, naturally took to trade when opportunity presented itself, among them a certain Aiakes, son of Bryson, who held office in the island some time before 540 B.C. and left a statue of himself – which still survives – accompanied by an inscription stating

that he had dedicated a tithe of plunder to Hera, chief deity of the island. A man of great wealth and influence, he had three sons named Polycrates, Pantagnotos and Syloson, the eldest of whom seized the administrative power and made himself tyrant of Samos about 540 B.C. A few years before this happened, the mainland kingdom of Lydia had been engulfed by Persia, whose dominion spread all over the western seaboard of Asia Minor, putting Samos in great peril, since the Empire of the Medes was now only separated from the island by the narrow mile-wide strait. Such a danger may well have given Polycrates the opportunity to seize power; for the rule of an autocrat, in control of a small professional army and a large powerful fleet, was the one thing that could save the island from being annexed to the Empire. Leaving the mainland to the enemy, he concentrated on obtaining control of numerous neighbouring islands and thus building an Aegean maritime dominion, large enough to be classed by later writers in their catalogues of 'thalassocracies'. His blockade of the mainland was certainly effective, although his buccaneering habits were often a great annoyance even to his friends. Herodotus, however, reports Polycrates as saying that he showed more favour to a friend if he restored what he had taken than if he never took it at all.

Our considerable knowledge of sixth-century Samos is due to the fact that Herodotus himself, in the following century, resided there for some time, and was therefore well informed; and, for this reason, the Third Book of his *History* contains, in its first quarter, a vivid and lively account of the despot and his circle. Emphasis in the Samian Court was primarily on engineering and on the fine arts; and it was through the latter that Pythagoras began to be a person of account in the affairs of Polycrates and, for a while, a trusted go-between in the despot's diplomatic relations with Egypt. At this time, Pythagoras was probably in his sixties. Some thirty years earlier he had been associated with Pherekydes of Syros, a thinker who taught the doctrine of metempsychosis (transmigration), or more correctly palingenesia (reincarnation),

which Pythagoras himself so eagerly adopted. Later, he was misrepresented as believing in the transmigration of souls from one creature to another; whereas what he asserted was that reincarnation occurred, and that he, for example, had taken part in the Trojan war six centuries before his own day.

For many years Pythagoras followed his father's trade of gem-engraver, being a professional celator, or artist-craftsman, not only working on seals, but also as a practising silversmith. Naturally, he became associated with other well-known celators in Samos – men such as Theodoros and Rhoikos, sons of Telekles I, and the son of Rhoikos, Telekles II. Thanks to the absence of specialization, artists were still closely linked, including architects, engineers and engravers; and the mathematical Pythagoras was undoubtedly acquainted with Eupalinos, who cut the famous tunnel through a high hill to provide the city with an ample water-supply. This was a remarkable achievement for the period, since the tunnel was well over half a mile long. At its north end, a depression was fed by several brooks, the water from which was gathered, with the help of a dam, into a simple reservoir. Thence it flowed into the tunnel by an under-water entrance, running in a deep trench, alongside which was cut a pathway. At the south end, the water debouched into a big conduit, which branched and supplied individual fountains in the streets of Samos. Herodotus described this remarkable structure in a passage that, at one time, was regarded with a certain scepticism, until some sixty years ago the southern entrance to the tunnel was rediscovered. Although it contained no water, the pathway could be used. When I was in Samos over twenty-five years ago, it was possible to walk up the tunnel from the south to the point at which the engineers – working in separate parties, one from the north, the other from the south – had eventually met. It is a remarkable tribute to the ability of Eupalinos, and to the comparative accuracy of his calculating instruments, that at the meeting-point, there is an error of about three feet only. In the thirtieth chapter of his Third Book, Herodotus gives the following vivid and brief description:

I have written thus at length of the Samians, because they are the makers of the three greatest works to be seen in any Greek land. First of these is the double-mouthed channel pierced for an hundred and fifty fathoms through the base of a high hill; the whole channel is seven furlongs long, eight feet high and eight feet wide; and throughout the whole of its length there runs another channel twenty cubits deep and three feet wide, through which the water, coming from an abundant spring, is carried by its pipes to the city of Samos.

The other great work produced by the same engineer was an impressive mole, which greatly extended the harbour of the city of Samos, enabling the fleet of Polycrates, and, perhaps, some of the Samian privateers, to lie along the quayside, instead of being drawn up on the beach. This gave the island a second valuable harbour; for on the north coast there already existed one of the finest natural harbours in the Mediterranean, known as Bathy, or 'Deep' – apparently the water-filled crater of an extinct volcano.

If such great structures as the works of Eupalinos had been made in Mesopotamia or in Egypt, they would have been the product of slave-labour. Not so, apparently, in Samos, where Polycrates had the politico-economic situation well in hand. Free labour was acquired by the offer of high wages; the money for the wages was acquired by buccaneering, judiciously mingled with trading; and the capitalist state, giving full employment, maintained a contented populace, itself giving ample employment to farmers, shepherds, and wine-growers. Like Peisistratus in Athens, Polycrates kept his people happy; and he was ultimately destroyed, not by revolution within, but by a treacherous enemy without. A family of multi-competent craftsmen – Theodoros, Rhoikos and the rest – added, by their fame among contemporaries, to the romantic aura that began to surround Polycrates. As Samians, they could obtain easy contact with Egypt; and when the famous Greek treaty-port of Naucratis was founded on the western branch of the Nile, Samos obtained exceptional advantages. The management of this Settlement was vested in nine Greek city-

states, who secured a common enclosure, and in three greater states, Aegina, Miletos and Samos. Amasis was Pharaoh of Egypt when Polycrates became despot of Samos; a formal alliance between the two rulers was soon established; and, from that time, the Samian despot enjoyed a long run of good fortune.

In the following anecdote, Diodorus supplies a record of the skill that Samian sculptors acquired from their Egyptian contacts:

Telekles and Theodoros, the sons of Rhoikos, made the statue of the Pythian Apollo for the Samians. The story runs that one half of the image was made at Samos by Telekles, while the other half was fashioned at Ephesos by his brother Theodoros, and that, when the parts were joined together, they fitted so exactly that the whole figure appeared to be the work of one artist. This method of working was never practised by the Greeks, but was in common use among the Egyptians. And the statue at Samos, being made in accordance with the Egyptian system, is bisected by a line which runs from the crown of the head through the centre of the figure to the groin and divides it into precisely equal and similar halves.

These same artists were supposed to have been first among the Greeks to employ, for making hollow bronze statues, the *cire-perdue* method of casting, another Egyptian invention. When Pythagoras migrated to Italy, he adapted this technique to other ends that he had in view; and in Italy has been found the finest example of an early Greek bronze statue cast according to this method – the Apollo Piombino, now in the Louvre.

Like Mnesarchos, father of Pythagoras, Theodoros was an engraver of gems; and he made for Polycrates himself a signet-ring, containing an emerald carved in intaglio with a lyre – no mean accomplishment, considering that emeralds are only a little less hard than diamonds. Although this celebrated gem has not survived, there exists a small, and almost contemporary, replica – a scaraboid sard, pierced on its short axis and mounted in a modern ring. The stone, which was formerly in the collection of the Earl of Southesk, has for type a simple lyre, such as was made from the

shell of a tortoise and a pair of curved horns. Here the shell is made to resemble a mask and the instrument takes on personality. Indeed, the lyre recalls a very similar instrument, decorating the reverse of certain coins minted in Calymna, an island that formed part of the Samian maritime empire. Perched on the crossbar is a little crow, a bird sacred to Apollo, as the lyre itself was.

One of the more pleasing anecdotes in the *History of Herodotus* is concerned with this same ring. The tyrant's good fortune had continued; and his friend Amasis, hearing the report, took it to heart, and, being a superstitious person, wrote Polycrates a letter:

Amasis to Polycrates: Verily it is sweet to hear that a friend and confederate fareth well; but me thy great prosperities please not, because I well know that God is a jealous god. And I would that I myself, and those for whom I care, might prosper in some of their affairs and fail in others, and so spend their life faring well and ill by turns. For never yet have I heard of any man, prosperous in all things, who had not an evil end at the last, and was not rooted out utterly. Therefore now be thou persuaded of me, and guard against thy prosperities thus: take that thing which upon consideration thou shalt find to be worth most to thee, and for the loss whereof thou shalt most be grieved in heart, and so lose it that it shall never more come to the sight of men.

Duly impressed, Polycrates considered which of his possessions it would most hurt him to lose; and his mind turned to the seal-stone carved by Theodoros and attached to its golden hoop. So he put to sea in a vessel of fifty oars, and threw his treasure into deep water before the eyes of his companions. Five or six days later, a fisherman, who had caught a large fish, brought it as a present to Polycrates, addressing him in the following words:

This fish I caught, O king; but, albeit I live by the toil of my hands, I resolved not to take it to market, but deemed it worthy of thee and of thy great empire. Therefore I have brought it to thee.

Presently the cook, preparing the fish for dinner, found in its stomach the ring of Polycrates. The tyrant, rejoicing, reported his

good fortune to his friend Amasis; the latter, however, decided that it was impossible for one man to rescue another man from his fate, and that, since Polycrates enjoyed too much good fortune, he must inevitably come to an evil end. So, according to Herodotus, he sent a delegate to Samos and broke off the alliance.

The precise date at which diplomatic relations were severed is not known, although it must have happened after Polycrates sent Pythagoras as his personal emissary to Egypt. Diogenes Laertios, in his *Life of Pythagoras*, records a matter of some interest: 'He [Pythagoras] made himself three silver goblets, and gave them away to each of the priests in Egypt. . . . Accordingly, he went to Egypt at that time when Polycrates gave him a letter of introduction to Amasis; and he learnt their [the Egyptians'] language.' Apart from depicting Pythagoras as silversmith, as well as gem-engraver, this story throws some fresh light on his visit to, and residence in, Egypt. The purpose of his visit must have been an important one, since it appears that he intended to secure the good offices of the heads of the priesthood whose influence, in their own country, was of the greatest value. From Egypt Pythagoras returned to Samos – presumably after more than a year's absence – and found himself unable to continue life under a tyranny. We cannot so much as guess what it was that caused the breach between these two remarkable Samians, nor why Pythagoras experienced a feeling of intense frustration. Although probably over seventy years old, he decided to emigrate; and, about the year 535 B.C., he left Samos for Italy, never to return. Croton, a great Greek city in the south of Italy, was the place to which he went, perhaps because he already had a friend from that city, Demokedes, court physician to Polycrates. South Italy was to see the full unfolding of the Pythagorean philosophy, which had never matured in the island empire of Samos. But it will appear that his life in Samos made a very great contribution to the profoundly mathematical 'Philosophy of Form' which he evolved in his new home.

When Pythagoras sailed away from the island of Samos, leaving

the frustrations of a tyrant's rule behind him, he was moving into a land where freedom then flourished. No autocrat had as yet got control of any State in the southern regions of Italy, which the Greeks called *Megale Hellas*, and the Romans *Magna Graecia*. Over seventy years of age – or, by another account, about sixty – he had already accumulated in his eastern home a vast amount of learning, knowledge and practice. In boyhood, as his father's apprentice, he was drawn to mathematical enquiries by observation of the crystals used by gem-engravers. Sir William Ridgeway once pointed out that

combining his knowledge of crystallography, gained from his father's trade, with that of Egyptian geometry, Pythagoras conceived the world as built up of a series of material bodies imitating geometric solids. Quartz-crystal would give him a perfect pyramid and double pyramid; iron pyrites is found in cubes massed together; the dodekahedron is found in nature in the common garnet; and the beryl is a cylindrical hexagon.

Egyptian priests, like those for whom he made the silver goblets, had long been familiar with facts to which he later attached importance. They knew that the circumference of a circle is about $3\frac{1}{2}$ of the diameter; that a triangle, the sides of which are in the ratio 3 : 4 : 5, must contain a right-angle. He himself discovered that the fifth and the octave of the note given by a stretched string can be produced by stopping the string at two-thirds and at half of its length. He was also led to the study of proportion by its effective use in temple and domestic architecture. He had watched the architects at their planning of the large Temple of Hera, the engineer building a big harbour mole and piercing a tunnel through a great hill at Samos. He had watched his fellow-artists bringing together two halves of a statue made miles apart, and had seen the two halves fit. Bronze casting by the subtle method of *cire-perdue* had become familiar to him, a worker himself in both silver and copper who had once remarked that the sound of bronze being beaten was the voice of some deity shut up within it. A long voy-

age, adventure, power, security and admiration, all led to the shaping of a vast amount of unco-ordinated knowledge into a philosophy of *form*, that contrasted with the older Ionian thinkers and their philosophy of *matter*.

When we imagine Pythagoras migrating from Samos to Croton, we should not visualize a lone traveller, a sad old man, leaning over the stern of some sixth-century galley until the cliffs of Samos drop below the horizon. The truth, I think, can be better imagined in the picture of a small clan migration; two, three, or more ships, the patriarch in command, wife, sons, daughters-in-law, daughters, grandchildren, servants, crew, domestic animals, and chattels. Long afterwards, Apollonius the Arithmetician stated that, when Pythagoras had discovered that the square of the hypotenuse of a right-angled triangle is equal to the squares of the sides containing the right angle, he sacrificed a hundred oxen. This is probably a romantic exaggeration. But it shows that Apollonius thought of Pythagoras as within the income-group of those who could afford extravagant religious observances. It is not known why Pythagoras, travelling west, should have chosen Croton for his new home. In Samos, however, he had a friend, Demokedes of Croton, the court physician, who might have given him letters of introduction. He sailed round Peloponnese and put into the Corinthian Gulf in order first to visit Delphi, a proper procedure for one who was to be a Founding Father, since he became, in effect, the second planter of the colony. There is a tradition that, while he was there, he showed some interest in the Holy Tripod upon which the Pythia sat and Apollo himself might sit. Symbolically, the Tripod was for Pythagoras most important: its association was with Apollo, Delos, Delphi, Celature, Numbers, even musical sound – all that mattered most to him. Furthermore, it had once been the badge and symbol of the Sages. In the fourth century B.C., Ardon of Ephesus wrote a book called *Tripous*, about a tripod awarded to, and held for a time by, the Seven Sages in rotation. Thales, first holder, passed it to another; and it went the rounds until it came back to Thales, who then deposited it with

Apollo at Delphi. Now one of the Seven Sages was Pherekydes, the teacher of Pythagoras. The latter, of course, was too young to have held the tripod in the original 'seven-rotation'; but he – or his disciples for him – must have laid claim to 'sage-status'.

So Pythagoras arrived in Croton about 535 B.C., never to return to his home in Samos. When he got there, the city was in a trough of deep depression, having recently sustained at the hands of another body of Greeks in Italy – the Western Locrians – a serious military defeat at the battle of the River Sagras. The organization of the State had, it seems, gone to pieces; and at the time when Pythagoras landed, there was no one in Croton capable of pulling the social order back into shape. He arrived with a great reputation; and his tremendous personality imposed itself almost instantly upon the Crotoniates, to whom he must have appeared as a veritable emissary of the high gods. Before we try to assess his profound discoveries in the realms of mathematics, geometry and science, we must consider his achievements in the economic field. The first problem that confronted him was monetary. Modern scholars have assembled a mass of evidence, showing that it had become imperative to stabilize the State Exchequer by the creation of a coinage.

Civilized communities, of course, have found it possible to get on without the employment of coined money issued by the State. A great country like Ancient Egypt never used coined money until Alexander the Great introduced it for commercial purposes when he founded Alexandria, whence it slowly spread to other cities in the Nile valley. Not until the Roman Republic had conquered the whole of Italy, and brought it politically into subjection, did the Romans discover the need for State coinage. People can make do quite satisfactorily with barter and unminted bullion; but it is a cumbersome business. Certainly the Greeks of Asia and the bigger states of European Greece had grown accustomed to the employment of coined money a century before it was introduced to the Greek states of South Italy by a man of great experience, knowledge and genius, who could hardly have been any

other than Pythagoras himself. Except for a solitary city on the west coast of the peninsula that used silver of 'Asiatic type', no Greek-Italian states employed coined money. The coinage that Pythagoras proceeded to invent for the people of Croton was very original indeed. Primitive methods had so far sufficed for early Greek minting. An artist or a craftsman would carve an intaglio design on a thick disk of bronze – the obverse die, which fitted into a pit sunk in the top face of an anvil. On the lower end of a square-faced bronze punch, he next carved another intaglio design – the reverse die. In a little furnace nearby, blank disks of silver, carefully adjusted to the correct weight, were heated to make them adequately malleable; and, one by one, these silver disks were placed, with the aid of a pair of tongs, upon the anvil over the sunk obverse die. Down upon each disk came the reverse die, on the end of the square-faced punch held in a man's left hand. The hammer in his right hand smote several blows upon the upper end of the punch. The tongs then pulled the silver disk away; for it was now a finished coin which only needed cooling.

Croton's first requirement was a coinage so odd and unfamiliar that it would not drift away in the company of foreign currencies. It was to circulate within the State, and to attract alien coinage to the State in payment of commodities. The type evolved was so neatly devised that dumpy foreign coins could be heated, hammered flat, and minted anew to make Crotoniate money. The weight standard adopted was that operating both in Pythagoras' homeland of Samos and in Corinth, whose merchants handled the great bulk of the trade with Greek Southern Italy. When these requirements are borne in mind, it is pleasing to observe the manner in which the problem was tackled. Dies of large diameter were cut: the obverse incuse (that is to say, intaglio), the reverse in relief bearing the identical design of the incuse obverse die. They were carefully adjusted so that, between them, the hot flattened silver blank could be struck despite its special thinness. One die resembled the 'core', the other resembled the 'mantle', used in the manufacture of thin-walled bronze figures cast by the *cire-perdue*

method. Simultaneously, the design, with its heavy moulded border, took on the character of an object produced by pressure-moulding. Indeed, it is a well-known principle that thin sheets of metal, when traversed by pressure-moulded ridges, correspondingly indented on the under-surface, are remarkably proof against bending or buckling. In fact, the joint effort of type and border was to render these thin flans immensely strong. Two further points are worthy of note. First, the inscription on the earliest coins was hammered into the die with little letter-punches such as silver-smiths then used. Second, the type was a big tripod. This, we have seen, besides being sacred to Apollo, was associated with Pythagoras himself; and, as depicted on the coin, it is a pressure-moulded tripod.

Master of Croton, treated almost like a Saviour-god, Pythagoras with his friends began to form the famous 'Brotherhoods' which included women members. Founded to advance the Apolline cult and the study of mathematics, geometry and musical theory, they soon produced offshoots in other Greek South Italian cities, which then proceeded to introduce their own coinages of pressure-moulded fabric, with their own badges. If he ever thought of returning to Samos, the thought was banished by news of the evil fate that overtook the Sage's former master Polycrates and the people of the island in 522 B.C. Lured on to the mainland by a Persian satrap, the tyrant was seized and crucified, a barbaric punishment that the Persians had adopted from the Assyrians. Samos itself was taken over by the despot's brother; and invasion combined with civil war to devastate and almost depopulate the island. It would seem that the Brotherhoods in Italy early adopted an aristocratic turn. Not only did this antagonize the people and, later, lead to revolutions; but Pythagoras himself probably behaved in a near-tyrannical manner; for about 515 B.C. he was obliged to leave Croton and settle in Metapontum, capital of a great corn-growing state. There he died, perhaps about 509 B.C. The Sage, who had seemed God-given to the people of Croton in 535 B.C., left their city after exercising power for twenty years.

Are we to assume that one who must have combined the gifts and the energy of Leonardo da Vinci, Mr Gladstone and General William Booth was getting a little tiresome at the age of ninety-three?

Concentration on ideas that are absorbing to people who revel in mathematics and geometry, in questions of design and form, had begun with Pythagoras; but, after his death, similar studies were pursued and extended by his disciples and followers, and it is now difficult to determine how far Pythagoras went himself. But he went far in his concentration on form, and as Professor Burnet, one of the greatest authorities on early Greek philosophy, has remarked, 'We sometimes feel tempted to say that Pythagoras had really hit upon the secret of the world when he said "things are numbers".' Numbers are part of the 'shape' of things, immanent in things past and future, as well as in the things of present. They are essential to form; and Pythagoras, we have already observed, constructed a philosophy of form that contrasted with the teachings of the older Ionian thinkers and their philosophy of matter. If we are to understand the revolutionary nature of this construction, a little must be said about the older materialists.

During the sixth century B.C., Greeks in two great Ionian cities began to ask themselves 'what is this world in which we live?' The first 'philosopher' was Thales of Miletus, celebrated for his theory of the material cause of the universe, and for the assumption that the various kinds of matter are modifications of a single increate and imperishable element. All things, he said, were water. Such an idea eliminated all thoughts of divine intervention and, indeed, rendered gods unnecessary; yet he made no attempt to explain why and how the one imperishable element could modify itself. Anaximander, also of Miletus, accepted this assumption, but maintained that this material 'something' was mist or cloud; while his follower and compatriot, Anaximenes, chose for his principle, air, from which development took place by thinning or by thickening. Last in the series, about 500 B.C., came the famous Heraclitus of Ephesus, whose main propositions were, firstly, that fire is the

principle: secondly, that all things are in flux. The latter marked an important new departure since Heracleitus recognized that there can be no knowledge of that which is in flux. Up to this point, thinkers had been asking 'what is Being?' From now on, they found themselves obliged to ask also 'what is Knowledge?'

The answer that Pythagoras – himself of Ionian extraction – gave was: 'Knowledge resides in numbers that explain Form.' Many years later, Plato was deeply impressed, and even influenced, by Pythagorean learning; and from him and from Aristotle much information on this topic may be derived. Classification was essential; and numbers were classified as even, or odd: numbers that have no factors but unity are *prime*: products of three numbers are *solid*, and some of these are *cubes*: products of two numbers are *plane*, and some of these are *squares*; the rest, *oblongs*. The odd numbers, being the differences between successive squares, were also called *gnomons*. A *triangular* number was half the product of any two successive numbers. Beyond all this lay the other interests and sciences of Pythagoras and his disciples, including, of course, geometry, music and even astronomy; for his followers are said to have held that the earth revolved around the sun; and one of them went so far as to state that the earth had a rotary motion.

Pythagoras' theories are the more surprising because of the awkwardness of Greek notation, which was almost as clumsy as the Roman. In fact, all sums were done on the abacus, or reckoning board, which was divided into columns for units, tens, hundreds, etc.; while, in each column the digit required was represented by so many beans or pebbles, not exceeding nine. With an abacus much can be done; but Greek mathematicians probably had a capacity for carrying a great deal in their heads. Numbers, shapes, measurements, sounds, were now no longer taken for granted, but were studied with an excitement that merged at last, like all Greek experience, into sheer aesthetic pleasure. For Pythagoras and his disciples, behind all these researches lay delight and the pursuit of happiness. The greatest tribute ever paid him

was in a kind of epitaph by a philosopher and ex-Pythagorean of the following generation, Empedocles of Akragas:

And there was among them a man of rare knowledge who had won the utmost wealth of understanding, and was master of all manner of skilled work; for whensoever he strained with all his wits he easily saw everything of all the things that are, in ten, even in twenty, lifetimes of men.

Here is a concise appreciation by an author nearer to him in time even than Herodotus, who refers to his wealth of ideas, his skill in fine art, and the vastness of his knowledge.

It is possible that a small-scale portrait of Pythagoras exists; for, although accurate portraiture was not commonly produced in the sixth century B.C., it seems to have begun to appear, when a certain realism crept into Greek art, fairly early in the fifth century. Our belief in the existence of such a portrait is based upon the following facts. Mnesarchos I was a gem- and ring-engraver; his son, Pythagoras I the Great, a gem-, silver-, and bronze-worker, had a son named Mnesarchos II, who would have called a son of his Pythagoras. The family profession was celature. Pythagoras II, one of the most famous Greek artists, was a celator. He worked only in bronze, and he was almost always described as 'of Rhegium'; but once, on a statue base discovered at Olympia, he set 'The Samian' after his name. Tradition maintained that Pythagoras II was taught by Klearchos of Rhegium who flourished about 525 B.C. Pythagoras II may have been born about that time in Croton; and, after the death of his grandfather, at the age of about sixteen, he may have gone to Rhegium and been apprenticed to Klearchos. Two criticisms of the style of Pythagoras II can be traced back to Xenocrates, a bronze sculptor and writer of the Lysippean School; they have consequently some value. Realism combined with rhythm and proportion were attributed to him. When an athlete gained three victories at Olympia, it was the custom to set up a portrait statue of him. Pythagoras II made in 472 B.C. a statue of Euthymos after his third victory, possibly,

therefore, a kind of portrait statue; but we cannot tell how realistic it was, although realism was ascribed to him. If he had this gift, it is conceivable that he may have made from memory a quasi-realistic portrait of his grandfather, Pythagoras I. Such a portrait seems to have been known as early as about 440 B.C.; for it was copied by an Abderite die-engraver to embellish the reverse of a coin issued by a magistrate named 'Pythagores' – and this in a city where the memory of Pythagoras I was held in reverence. We cannot be sure whether or no this 'portrait' gives anything like a faithful record of his features, but the possibility is attractive. It means that a unique coin may provide us with the likeness of one of the greatest thinkers and most remarkable men in the history of the world.

DIOGENES: THE ORIGINAL CYNIC

SAILING from the eastern end of the Bosphorus, following the southern coast of the Black Sea, one arrives, about half-way along the Anatolian mainland, at an ancient city called Sinope. Its name has been preserved today, for it is still called Sinop; but its glory and power faded long ago. It lies on an easily defended peninsula, and has a good harbour on either side of the neck. From Sinope, sailing due north, a navigator followed the shortest route to the Crimea, which played so important a part for many centuries in the history of the Greek world. Founded, tradition said, by Miletus before 756 B.C., Sinope was one of many examples that testified to the genius for colonization possessed by all the Ionian states, and especially by the Milesians. In classical times, it was famous for its market gardens and for the coarse timber and the fine woods, suited to cabinet-making, which grew in the mountains south of the city. But its principal industry seems to have been the catching, salting and smoking of tunny-fish. Sinope was itself a colonizer, and established numerous dependencies and factories along the coasts of the Black Sea. So prosperous a city was bound to arouse the greed of more powerful neighbours, and especially that of the Persian Empire, which implemented, whenever possible, its claim to control any state in the sub-continent of Asia Minor. Yet it was as late as about 370 B.C. that the brilliant Persian satrap Datames gained possession, for about eight years, of Sinope and stamped his name upon its coins. Assassination removed him in 362 B.C.; and the Sinopeans appear to have regained, and kept, their freedom for a considerable time thereafter.

Frequently a Greek city state's coinage, carefully studied in its own context, may tell the historian a good deal that has not been

recorded in literary sources; and Sinopean money happens to be very informative. The silver struck earlier than, and for a while after, 500 B.C. bore a single type – the head of a sea-eagle – and, before the end of the fifth century, this was replaced by handsome two-type pieces, at least one of which may have been the work of a western engraver who had fled from Sicily, when war between Syracuse and Carthage curtailed employment for artists. Certainly, the charming head of a young goddess has a Sicilian look, while the coin's reverse displays a sea-eagle on the back of a young dolphin and part of the state's name. Identical reverses began presently to appear on other Greek Black Sea coins, minted at Istrus near the Danubian delta, and at Olbia by the Dnieper. Meanwhile, at Sinope, this money was followed about 370 B.C. by coins with identical types, but with the name of the Persian satrap Datames, to whom reference has already been made. When, in 362 B.C., Sinope regained her freedom, the state continued to coin without intermission down to the end of the century. The types were unchanged but for the addition of an *aplustre* – a ship's standard – in front of the face of the goddess. Names of no fewer than forty-two annual magistrates are on record; but, as such lists are always incomplete, a probable fifty years of uninterrupted self-government may be assumed. It must be emphasized that, for the last half of the fourth century, good Greek coinage continued in the city. Nevertheless, there began to appear among neighbours of the state certain somewhat monstrous imitations of Sinopean coins; for there is a record of thirty-seven imitative coins with, in place of the Greek, an Aramaic legend reading 'Ariawrath', and eighteen other pieces with a distorted Aramaic legend. All these are thought to have been minted elsewhere than in Sinope.

The Aramaic coins inscribed 'Ariawrath' were issued by a certain Ariarathes, who was established as a kind of minor satrap in Cappadocia, in the fortress of Gaziura some sixty-five miles due south of the Black Sea, between the years 355 and 333 B.C. In this fortress, Ariarathes struck silver shekels with types imitating those of a powerful Persian governor named Mazaeus who was satrap

of Cilicia and Trans-Euphrasia; and little shekels like these might obtain currency in the mountain townships of Anatolia, but in the wealthy coastal region of the Black Sea they would find small welcome. Ariarathes, therefore, it would seem, unscrupulously reproduced the types of the popular currency of the richest Greek city, Sinope, and added to them his own name in Aramaic. Other barbarous imitations that survive were no more than blundering attempts made by up-country coin-imitators, who sought to combine authoritative satrapal legends with popular Greek types. This is made certain by a careful examination of the weights of these pseudo-Greek pieces, since carefully adjusted weight-standards prevailed in all Greek states that had a high financial reputation. In the present instance, all coins of true Sinopean mintage prove to be of reliable and steady weight, while all the imitations are metrologically chaotic. Nevertheless, they bore Sinopean types; and so round the shores of the Black Sea these travesties of good coin found their way into the company of decent Greek Sinopean pieces. Perhaps, at this point, Gresham's Law began to operate and the spurious coins drove out the decent ones. At all events, they became a scandal, a grievous reflection upon the organization, the finances and the integrity of the Mint, and of the Bank of Sinope. The crisis was met by the appointment of an eminent citizen named Hikesias, head of the National Bank, to the office of Monetary Magistrate or Treasurer – probably to both offices – an appointment that would last for a year, assuming the usual Greek practice to operate. His duty was, presumably, to save the currency from chaos and collapse. But we learn about him and his activity, not because of his own merits, but because he was the father of a famous son – the real originator of the Cynic discipline.

There was, about A.D. 220, an industrious compiler of information drawn from older sources, who was called Diogenes, and who took as a supplementary name 'Laertios' or 'Laertides', a label sometimes used for the great Odysseus, son of Laertes. Cautious appraisal is required of any student of this voluminous writer; but by general consent his *Lives of the Philosophers* is an anecdotal

work of some merit. Anyhow, it is to him that we owe a life of Diogenes the Cynic, which opens with the following remarks:

Diogenes of Sinope, son of the Banker Hikesias, was exiled at the time when his father was Managing Director of the National Bank and had tampered with the coinage. Further, Eubulides [a writer of the fourth century B.C.] in his book on Diogenes, says that Diogenes himself was a party to the tampering and was exiled together with his father.

According to another account, Hikesias died in prison; but Diogenes emigrated, and, coming to Delphi, consulted the Oracle as to what he should do to become famous. The reply that he received was, for him, a shattering answer. But, before this is considered, it will be necessary to find out how Hikesias, with or without his son's aid, 'tampered' with the money. Material evidence for the Banker and his office is there on the coins themselves; for there are in existence a few silver pieces – of fine design, pure metal, well-struck and well-preserved – all of a single year and bearing, besides the city's name, SINŌ, that of the Magistrate (H)IKESIO or (H)IKESI. Nothing whatever is at fault with his own issues; and he certainly did not strike false coin. There can be little doubt that, while issuing his own good money and respecting the older good currency of Sinope, he *struck at* the inferior imitations made outside the city with their ugly types and inferior weights. If we may borrow the Greek word actually used about this action of his, then we must say that he *paracharacted* coinage.

Evidence from numerous other sources in the ancient world goes to show that, when you saw the need to demonetize currency, you arranged to have every silver piece struck with a large cold chisel, which cut a gash deep into the coin. By this act, you reduced the piece to bullion, assessable only by weight and fineness; and this action was known to the Greeks as *paracharaxis*. That specifically, was the 'crime' of Hikesias, which got him into prison. Once more, the material evidence for his actions exists, since it can be shown that, of all the surviving non-Sinopean monies,

made before Hikesias took office, no less than 60 per cent have been defaced by chisel gashes – that is, they have been *paracharacted*. No other coin-series, emanating from any part of the ancient Greek world, can be found to show so high a proportion of defacement.

Why, it may well be asked, was the highly respected and respectable Hikesias sent to gaol for his laudable attempt at stabilization of the Sinopean currency? It is only possible to hazard a guess – or, rather, two. First, it may be noted that under 5 per cent of good Sinopean coins of the early issue, and 8 per cent of a later issue, were *paracharacted* in error, the inference being that underlings of the Treasurer were careless in sorting out the good from the bad. Private enemies of his might seize upon this pretext, exclaiming that the Treasurer, from some unspecified but nefarious motive, was tampering with good State coinage. Secondly, and more probably, there must have been in Sinope an oligarchic and pro-Persian party, since Datames had held the city for at least eight years. Some of its members, infuriated with this high-handed defacement of coins with Satrapal legends, may have raised the cry that Hikesias was offering to the satrap in Cappadocia a needless insult, which might bring an unpleasant visitation upon the state. When he was called upon to render account for his year of office, there ensued the imprisonment of the official himself, and the exile of his son and assistant, Diogenes. The opening lines of his 'Life' certainly imply that the son of Hikesias was his father's subordinate. Of course, if the financial policy of the Treasurer was reversed with his fall, the poor coins passed back into currency, and that is why so many survive today.

Embittered, the victim of spite and injustice, Diogenes came to Athens, hating everything and everyone. An alien in Athens, he consorted with aliens and heard the doctrines preached mainly to slaves and aliens, the philosophy of Cynosarges, which has been termed 'the philosophy of the Proletariat'. Then he went to Delphi. Perhaps, as some have thought, he saw engraved on a column of the *pronaos* of Apollo's temple the famous maxim, 'Know

Yourself', which became part of his slogan. More probably, he merely aired his grievances, and the priests sized him up. Finally, he consulted the Oracle. His obscurity was rankling in his soul for at home he had been a man of account. 'What shall I do to be famous?' he asked. He received the reply: 'Know yourself and *paracharact* the currency.' But here there is a *double entendre*, in as much as the Greek word *nomismata* means both 'current coin' and 'current custom'. The Pythia was not a practitioner of psychotherapy, Diogenes, there can be no doubt, had already a severe *paracharaxis-complex*; and the answer did not mend matters in this critical situation. When the Oracle gave the command *parachaxonta nomismata*, the words meant either 'gash coins' or 'slash conventions'. Inevitably, the poor man became, if not mad, even more strange than he had been before; and the bee in his bonnet grew into a full-sized hornet, with a sting like a chisel devoted to the *paracharaxis* of every custom and convention, every philosopher and every fool.

From all the confused tales, true and untrue alike, which are preserved about the sayings and doings of Diogenes, we do at least gather the abiding impression that his whole attitude was not constructive but destructive. The great Cynic did not propose to shatter the edifice of custom and law in order to rebuild something saner and more balanced, like one melting down old coin and then striking upon it fresh types and values. He merely did to conventions and to men what his father did to the ugly, inferior coins that had masqueraded as the currency of Sinope. He struck at men with his tongue; he wrote plays advocating incest and cannibalism; he revelled in putting men out of countenance, as Hikesias had put silver out of currency.

Diogenes, as has already been observed, frequented Cynosarges, the gymnasium just outside Athens on the south side, reserved for aliens and second-class citizens – a kind of club for the lesser breeds without the wall. The first Greek to preach a new philosophy in this place had been a favourite pupil of Socrates named Antisthenes, son of a well-bred Athenian and a Thracian slave-girl;

hence an outsider. Since he was inferior in station, as well as in genius, to Plato, the two were not in accord, despite their common Socratic background. Antisthenes declared that happiness is based on virtue, which itself is based on knowledge, and that it can therefore be taught, mainly through an investigation of the meaning of words. This is akin to the approach of some thinkers today; but it has nothing to do with Cynicism, which originated with Diogenes himself. In later times, the wish to arrange simple philosophic 'pedigrees' caused writers like Laertius to claim Antisthenes as the first Cynic (or 'dog') philosopher, because he taught at Cynosarges – that is to say, at the 'White Dog' grove. Nevertheless, he was not the founder of the Cynic sect, which began with Diogenes, 'the Dog', even though some philosophic influence was transmitted. To claim Antisthenes as a Cynic is like claiming Socrates as a Platonist. Those who had once heard Antisthenes talk may have been preaching his somewhat detached and individualistic philosophy, tinged with anarchy, when Diogenes came to Athens and frequented Cynosarges. But the son of the banker Hikesias had encountered too many shocks in life to refrain from anti-social theory and practice. Nihilism was really what appealed to him, even though he must suffer great hardship to achieve it. *Askēsis* – the life-long profession of discipline and austerity – was his aim. The word is the root of what was later called 'asceticism', though with Diogenes this took a very odd form. All custom, every convention, was to be scorned, abandoned, even at the cost of outraging the feelings of others. And Diogenes became the real and only original Cynic, or 'Dog', because he consistently practised what he preached. Every call of nature was to be satisfied exactly as a dog satisfied it. If a vulgar public looked on, who cared? His possessions were limited to a stout staff – for his hard life had crippled his bones, and he required support – a bowl for food or drink, one cloak (which he used only in winter), and a great pottery vat, often misdescribed as a tub, which was his sole residence.

There is, in the Villa Albani in Rome, a well-known marble

statuette of the famed Diogenes, originally the property of one of his many admirers and followers, among whom there was a woman Cynic – a Thracian girl named Hipparchia – who seems to have followed the life of *askesis* customary with the sect. Even though Zeno, founder of Stoicism, borrowed much from the Cynics, it is obvious that Cynicism lasted, quite independently, down to Roman Imperial times. The statuette shows the old man naked, with nothing but his little food-bowl and his staff; some sculptor has put a seated dog beside him. Longevity was common to many famous Greeks; for they seem to have been very temperate in eating and drinking; and Diogenes, despite exposure and undernourishment, is said to have reached the age of ninety, by which time he had left Athens and was living in Corinth. In the former place, he had frequented Cynosarges outside the city wall; and, at Corinth, he resided – in his big pottery vat – outside the wall, in a suburb called Kraneion, where, centuries later, Pausanias the traveller saw his tomb. Tradition said that he was there visited by Alexander the Great, who was in Corinth only once, in 336 a.c., when he obtained from the Corinthian League nomination to the post of Commander-in-Chief for the coming war against Asia. The story of the meeting has been broken up by the biographer Laertios, but can be pieced together again. Reconstructed, it seems to show that Diogenes – unaware of his own fame, or notoriety – observed a splendidly caparisoned officer looking into his vat.

'I am Alexander, the king,' came the introduction.

A grunt, perhaps; then, 'I am Diogenes, the dog.'

'Are you not afraid of me?' asked the young king.

'Why, what are you, a good thing or a bad?'

'Good,' said Alexander.

'Well,' said the sage, 'who's afraid of the good?'

A pause – awkward, one imagines – before Alexander said, 'Ask anything you like of me.'

'Take your shadow off me.'

Evidence for the popularity of the story about this meeting,

which may really have happened, is to be found on a Hellenistic marble relief preserved, like the statuette, in the Villa Albani. A drawing of this little-known panel was made for the learned Winckelmann – Goethe's friend – and published in Volume II of his 1821 edition of *Monumenti Antichi Inediti*. In the background is a gate in the city wall, over which a temple appears. Beside the gate is Diogenes, inside his great vat which – cracked, like its owner – is held together with two large lead rivets. The Cynic's dog sits on top of the vat, and in front stands Alexander, armed.

There is really very little to be said in favour of the crazed old man, obsessed with his theory of *puracharaxis*, which made him entirely destructive. Yet we may perhaps allow him one merit; for he succeeded in demonstrating the extreme tolerance of fourth-century Greeks. In scarcely any other age or country would such a man have escaped molestation from an outraged and indignant public, even though Diogenes the Dog broke almost every rule and law that the police are expected to enforce.

EPICURUS AND THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS

IN THE masterly story that describes the second missionary journey of the Apostle Paul, one of the most attractive passages (*Acts xvii*) tells of his adventures in Athens, a city that he approached in a mood of respect like that of a modern American evangelist appearing in an ancient Seat of Learning. Following Socratic practice, he argued in the Agora daily with those who met him.

Then certain philosophers of the Epicureans and of the Stoics encountered him. And some said, What will this babbler say? other some, He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods.

King James's Authorized Version with its lively rendering of this passage is probably responsible for the interest which the English-speaking peoples have taken in two Hellenistic philosophical schools, and the words 'Stoic' and 'Epicurean' have become common usage in the English language, although the thought and practice for which these ancient thinkers stood has been seriously misinterpreted. In the first place, there seemed to be a kind of parallelism between Pharisees and Sadducees on the one hand, and Stoics and Epicureans on the other hand, though, in fact, there was no connection whatsoever. Anyhow, a tradition grew up not only in England, but in other parts of Europe as well, that Epicurus and his followers advocated good living bordering on over-indulgence. Therefore the Englishman, too often shame-faced about the enjoyment of good food, regards an epicure as a gastronomic libertine.

Zeus, according to legend, fell in love with a mortal girl called Aegina and begat Aeacus, grandfather of the famous Homeric

Ajax, one of whose sons was named Philaios. This hero was regarded as the originator of one of the most distinguished Athenian aristocratic clans to which there belonged in historic times celebrated people such as Miltiades, the victor of Marathon, Kimon, founder of the Athenian maritime empire, and the historian Thucydides. Epicurus, too, belonged to the ancient and noble clan of the Philaīdai, and he had as much right to claim membership of the Athenian aristocracy as had Plato himself. He was born in 342 B.C., son of Neokles and Charaistrate, who had left Athens among a group of colonists that settled in Samos in 352 B.C., for Samos counted as part of the Athenian State for a number of years. Obviously his parents, though distinguished, were not rich, for Neokles taught in Samos as a schoolmaster. At the age of eighteen, young Epicurus travelled to Athens in order to pass the examination that was required of every youth who intended to qualify as an Ephebos. After his military service he returned to Asia Minor, his family having moved to Ionian Colophon, and met in the nearby city of Teos a philosopher professing the teaching of Democritus. Epicurus immediately became interested in the scientific theories that had been developed by that great and famous citizen of Thracian Abdera, which was a colony of Teos.

The atomic theory, of which Democritus and a less-known precursor, Leukippos, were the first exponents, owed something to a Pythagorean background, because Pythagoras had been much pre-occupied with numbers and shapes; and one of his followers, Empedocles, was among the earliest physicists, being concerned with elements and the theory of survival of the fittest. Atomism, as evolved by the sage of Abdera, may be treated today as something in the nature of a lucky guess, but it needed a mind well trained, acute and quick, to do the guessing, and Democritus was endowed with such a mind. The most concise account of the whole theory was given fifty years ago by a great philosopher of Trinity College, Henry Jackson, Regius Professor of Greek in Cambridge:

The elements of things are, said the Atomists, the *full* and the *empty*; the full being an infinity of immutable *atoms*, differing from one another in *shape*, in *order*, and in *inclination*, while the empty is the vacuum or space without which motion would be impossible. Falling through space with velocities proportioned to their size, the atoms overtake and impinge upon one another. A *vortex* ensues, and in the course of it like atoms congregate in perceptible groups. In this way worlds, infinitely numerous, of which our world is one, come into being. The magnitude, the weight, and the resistance of bodies depend upon the atoms and the spaces of which they are composed. Sensations such as hot and cold, sweet and bitter, are affections which the object produces in the subject. Soul or mind, like fire, consists of atoms which, being fine and spherical, are conspicuously mobile. There are two sorts of knowledge: *genuine* knowledge, which has for its objects the atoms and the void, and *dark* knowledge, which has for its objects the impressions of sense.

This, evolved by Democritus in the latter part of the fifth century B.C., has always seemed to modern scientists a remarkably brilliant piece of ratiocination. And it was this that caught and fired the imagination of Epicurus.

Atomism became the basis on which Epicurus slowly constructed his philosophy, gradually combining scientific theory with theological speculation and a thoroughly humanistic ethic of conduct. He began to gather pupils around him in Asia Minor, starting his School in 311 B.C. at Mytilene, whence he presently moved to Lampsacus. The great decision was taken in 306 B.C. when he transferred for good to his natural homeland, Athens, taking all his pupils with him. This move meant that he decided to vie with the great Schools, like the Academy, the Lyceum and the Stoa, where Plato and Aristotle had talked and Zeno preached. Financial means at the philosopher's disposal enabled him to purchase a house to which was attached a large Garden that soon became the centre and the symbol of Epicureanism. Surprise and spite in his rivals gave rise to hostile comments and slander because, in addition to the numerous male pupils who came with him from Asia

Minor, his School was joined by a number of enthusiastic women, mainly youthful. Names of six of them are preserved in the Life of Epicurus written by Diogenes Laertios. Naturally the opponents of Epicurus, exasperated especially by his theology, sought to attack him in every way, and with masculine malice denounced these pupils as wanton wenches.

Most Greeks by the end of the fourth century B.C. had ceased to feel the ancient ties of State and State religion. Epicurus meant to free humanity from fears, and even from old traditions, and to give men in some sense a fresh start. What he had to add to atomism was significant, for he regarded sense-perception, of which all mankind is capable, as the only basis of knowledge. He could find no other proof of reality except in perception, for opinions may be either right or wrong. Existentialism, such as Monsieur Sartre propounds, has, in fact, reassessed and adopted something rather like this view.

On the scientific side, Epicurus made an addition to the atomic theory because he assumed a kind of arbitrary character in the movement of atoms, as conceived by Democritus, which made them *swerve* from their original direction. By means of this he tried to explain the first and all further collisions of atoms. A helpful gospel which he deduced from all this was that at death those atoms that go to make up the soul are dispersed, and sensation ceases instantly.

Gods? It is mistaken to think that Epicurus denied their existence. What he did deny was that they concern themselves with little human beings any more than men devise or order the lives of ants. The gods existed – giant spacemen and space-women – blissfully unaware of mortals, neither rewarding nor punishing. And so he came to the view that this life is all, for we disintegrate back into the uncountable atoms of which we are composed. Pessimism holds that Imperious Caesar, dead and turned to clay, might stop a hole to keep the wind away. Optimism holds that the nothingness which is coming to us is the peace that passeth all understanding. Thus Epicurus's ethic had for its aim only happiness – not at the

expense of others, for that hurts every way; but he commended as an aim the golden mean of the temperate, frugal and tranquil life, the symbol of which is the Garden.

Freedom from fear was what Epicurus gave to all who accepted the principle of his Physics. Man must no longer be afraid of death, of the gods, of the powers of nature and the aggressions of other men. Best, he said, to withdraw from the contentious world and seek only the simple human aim: that highest good – pleasure – in which we should be led by our natural desires and civilized feelings. This was the sole means of attaining happiness, and happiness was what humanity most required. He defined what he meant by pleasures in a letter that he wrote to his most brilliant disciple, Metrodorus, in the following words:— ‘I know not how to conceive the good, except through the pleasures of taste, sexual pleasures, and the pleasures of sound, and the pleasures of beautiful form.’ In this he was concerned with four of the five senses, and one observes that the pleasure of smell is not included, though he may have treated it as identical with the pleasure of taste. Such conception frankly stated must inevitably have led his enemies to assume his advocacy of gluttony and profligacy, evils that are completely absent in Epicurus’s conception of happiness; because only through moderation can happiness be attained. It seems, sometimes, as though he were the originator of what many centuries later was to become the central theme of the highest of American political aspirations as enshrined in the Declaration of Independence – Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.

Epicurus’s life compared to that of many other Greek poets and philosophers was rather short, for he died at the age of seventy-one. Liberty in the era of the immediate successors of Alexander the Great appeared to many a distinguished citizen of the Greek world to have vanished. But the pursuit of happiness remained, and was a possibility that Epicurus realized. He wrote a great deal and most of it survives only in epitome, much of which we owe to Laetius, who set his long life of Epicurus at the end of his book because he seems to have had more admiration for his memory

than for that of any other philosopher. From all this, and from the full transcript of his Will, and from certain remarkable portraits, we must conclude that Epicurus was one of the kindest and most friendly men in the whole long line of Greek philosophers. Indeed, the editors of Luebke's famous German Classical Dictionary describe him as the most lovable of them all. His kindness to his pupils, male and female, appears in all his teaching, and during the years in which he and they lived in the Garden his birthday was commemorated in a remarkable manner. Epicurus, who said the gods took no interest in mankind, was himself treated once a year almost like a god, and the ceremonial appropriate to the day was continued by Epicureans for as long as the philosophy lasted.

The simple life can be over-simplified, and in consequence can become unhealthy. It was part of Epicurus's theory of happiness, attained through moderation, that one must be very abstemious both in food and in drink. In the Garden they ate very little meat, and mainly fruit and vegetables; but while they were not total abstainers, they perhaps drank too much water and not enough wine, for it is recorded that their wine was greatly diluted. This, before the days when Hadrian built his aqueduct for Athens, cannot have been healthy, and we are not surprised to learn that Epicurus at the latter end of his life was a victim of dysentery. He also suffered grievously from stone in the kidney. The finest portrait, a head in Parian marble in the Metropolitan Museum, New York, shows a most remarkable and arresting face, lined with suffering. There is tension around the eyes and between the brows, but the mouth is still kind and generous.

Laertios describes his end in a circumstantial manner and says that when Epicurus was suffering greatly from his physical disabilities, he caused his great bronze bath-tub to be filled with very hot water, and as he got into it he took a large cup of strong, undiluted wine. It was thus he died in the bath. In his Will his men-servants were manumitted, and so was the maid, Phaidron, who had looked after him at the last. The famous Garden was left to his most competent and brilliant living pupil, the philosopher

Hermarchos of Mytilene, whom Epicureans were to rank next to the Master himself. There is in the Metropolitan Museum in New York a little bronze portrait statuette of Hermarchos which is one of the most attractive Greek works of art of the Hellenistic age. Looking at him we are able to observe that, like his master, he must have been a very kindly person.

Inevitably, there is speculation as to where in Athens the famous Garden may have been. Due south of the Acropolis and rather to the east of the Mouseion hill, which is now made conspicuous by the monument to Philopappos, there was a region known in classical times as 'The Gardens', and this precinct became famous because in it there was to be seen an elegant marble statue of Aphrodite by Alcamenes, most celebrated of the pupils of Pheidias. Indeed the statue was so much admired that it was frequently copied and a number of ancient replicas still survive. The Gardens probably lay just outside the city wall and to the west of the Cynosarges gymnasium associated with Antisthenes, Diogenes and the Cynics. It is possible that the property which Epicurus acquired, and called The Garden, abutted on the little park which held the statue of Aphrodite. Conceivably this might account for the fact that Epicureans, though dissociating themselves most deliberately from the gods in general, consistently treated Aphrodite as a symbol of Nature.

Titus Lucretius Carus, who produced in the first century B.C. his great epic poem in six books, *On the Nature of Things*, recorded faithfully in majestic Latin verse the philosophy and ethic of Epicurus, who seemed to him to have been the most god-like of human beings. This fantastic poem, which many scholars prefer even to the best of Virgil's works, opens with the famous invocation to Venus treated as the creative power of nature:

Mother of Aeneas, joy of men and gods, Venus the life-giver,
who beneath the gliding stars of heaven fillest with life the sea
that carries the ships and the land that bears the crops, thanks to
Thee every tribe of living things is conceived, and comes forth
to look upon the light of the sun.

Within the lifetime of Epicurus his doctrine grew up in a very troubled world in which all the old values that mattered to the City States had come tumbling down. Of course, the exploits of the Divine Alexander had enthralled the world; but the misdeeds of some of the upstart Hellenistic kings and princes appalled the world. Thoughtful and sensitive people who wished to get away from all this shrank into their shells, sometimes extravagantly like Diogenes 'the Dog', living hermit-crabwise in his vat. Yet many scientists and thinkers of the Greek world obviously found in Epicurus and his teaching the one happy escape, for his was a school of thought well suited to days of political uncertainty and turmoil. Epicureanism won its second great phase of popularity in precisely similar circumstances – the latter days of the Roman Republic which was slowly going to pieces under the weight of corruption at the top. Backed by the zeal of the Roman poet Lucretius, and his contemporary, the Greek philosopher Philodemus – who lived in the Epicurean villa with the big Library and Garden at Herculaneum – the teaching of Epicurus once again became a refuge for men and women with good, sensitive minds. The devotion of his disciples lingered after his death and was transmitted to later generations whose enthusiasm often caused them to pay him almost divine honours. Most devoted among them was Lucretius, who opened his second book with winged words of praise:

You, who out of deep darkness first raised a torch so clear, shedding light upon the true joys of life; it is you I follow, bright star of the Hellenic race; and in your deep-set prints firmly now I plant my own footsteps, because for love I long to copy you. . . . As soon as you begin to proclaim aloud the nature of things the terrors of the mind fly away, the walls of the world part asunder, I see things moving on through all the void. . . . The realms of Hades are nowhere to be seen, nor yet is earth a barrier.

Voltaire, for all his likeness to the Cynics, had, perhaps, something of the Epicureans, too. Attacking what he called the

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'infamous thing' – tyranny founded on privilege – he could adopt some of their ancient ideas; and when in 1758 he wrote *Candide*, satirizing a corrupt world, he too found for his fantasy a 'happy ending' in a garden.

THE WINE TRADE IN ANCIENT GREECE

Ariston men hydor: 'Water is best'; the famous three words open the published poems of Pindar, for they stand at the beginning of his First Olympian Ode, written for Hieron, ruler of Syracuse, whose horse won the race at Olympia in 476 B.C. Much comment has been made on the phrase, largely because past scholars, unfamiliar with modern Greece, thought of the ancient Greeks as continuous symposium wine-bibbers.

Oddly enough it was water as often as wine that inspired poets; and there are still springs with famous names to visit: Castalia and Kalliroë at Delphi; Hippocrene of Helicon; on the summit of Acrocorinth, cold Peirene, which gushed forth when the hoof of Pegasus first struck the rock, and a second Peirene, with its elaborate well-house, in the agora of Corinth itself; and Glauke, another spring nearby. In Athens there were at least two named Ennakrounos, or 'Nine-Spouts', as well as Klepsydra on the Acropolis. The Greeks of today, it has been often remarked, are as devoted to their water as were the ancients; and, in one respect, the situation has not changed, for you could then, as now, get good wine in variety to suit your palate, though ice-cold gushing water, tasting sharply or smoothly of minerals within the rock, was a rarity to be relished on the spot and not transportable. Artesian wells were, of course, unknown; surface rainwater, which in arid regions was carefully stored in underground cisterns, was bound to contain impurities; and the ordinary well in the plain or valley was, or is, so easily tainted that the ancients, like the moderns, found in most places that wine alone was safe and hygienic. Pindar's enthusiasm for pure water still exists, and the editors of the *Guide Bleu* (1948 edition) comment as follows: 'Spring water,

often exquisite, is perhaps the commodity that most excites the greed of this abstemious people. They drink great quantities: it is served everywhere in big glasses with ouzo, coffee, or Turkish delight. People drink it by itself, or sometimes mixed with a little wine, and the modern Greek attributes a thousand beneficent virtues to his water. Even the tourist ends by distinguishing the qualities and tastes of different springs' – especially in the mountain regions. The *Guide Bleu* – naturally patronizing in its assessment of most modern Greek wines – gives guarded approval to resinated wine (of which more presently), but admits it to be a taste worth acquiring.

Tainted water, and the risk of drinking it, encouraged viticulture in ancient Greece, and therefore helped trade in wine, the supposed medicinal virtues of which may be gauged by the fact that it was regularly supplied to slaves to keep them in good health. Once an organized cultivation and export of wine has been built up, the *connoisseur* emerges to sample brands, vintage and proof, as well as to pontificate on *bouquet* and *arrière-goût*. Such a one was the learned Athenaeus. His encyclopaedic, but rambling, work called *The Sages at Dinner* – another translation of the Greek title is *The Gastronomers* – took long to write, for it appears to have been started before A.D. 200, and to have been completed soon after A.D. 228. From the first Book and the twenty-fifth section onwards, references to wines of many kinds are introduced, and the full catalogue of drink gets under way. Obviously the extensive repertoire of themes discussed make Athenaeus' production one of the most important Greek works of later antiquity that survive. For his long list of wines he drew more on older written sources than on his personal experience of the various drinks; we cannot therefore be sure that every *en* to which he referred was still obtainable around A.D. 200. But Athenaeus was the great prototype of pedants; and it won a man more credit to be a literary know-all than to be a *dégustateur*. Not that the two were mutually exclusive, then as now; though today such people have grown very rare.

The list of famous wine-growing regions mentioned in *The Sages at Dinner* contains much repetition, since, because there are many quotations, place-names recur. Notable for their popularity were the wines of Chios, Thasos, Lesbos, Peparethos, Mende, Icaria, Euboea, Naxos, Corcyra, and all these places bore on their coins symbols of the export trade which was of such obvious importance to their economic stability. The powerful states of the Greek world, most of them, grew vines of their own; but it was presumably all for home consumption, and there is no record of wine exported for general use by Athens, Sparta, Corinth or Syracuse. But all the nine states and cities just mentioned, as well as numerous others, took the trouble between the sixth and the second centuries B.C. to advertise their produce.

When a man or a company of people wish to draw the attention of masses of other people to themselves, their theories or their products, they must find some means of conveying what they wish to convey quickly, as well as far and wide. Before the invention of the first printing-press, there was only one kind of 'printed' matter capable of being quickly spread abroad, and that was coinage. Once Peisistratus, ruler of Athens in the sixth century B.C., had started to use the types invented for Athenian silver coins in order to emphasize the greatness of Athens, protected by the goddess Athene, the idea of printed, or minted, propaganda began to operate. Centuries later, Republican Romans, followed by the line of Imperial Rulers of the ancient world, would grasp the possibility of using the types and the inscriptions on current coin to disseminate the notions that they wished their followers and subjects to absorb. This was propaganda, and – as historians perceive ever more clearly – propaganda of a most efficient kind. It could be used to serve commercial as well as political or dynastic ends. Though only some Greek states used their coin types, or part of them, to call attention to exportable wares, they are not hard to recognize. The Macedonian and Thessalian plains were famed for rearing horses; the same districts, as well as Euboea, Crete and South Italy, were rich in cattle; the last province, with

COIN TYPES OF WINE STATES IN THE AEGEAN REGIONS

<i>State</i>	<i>Grapes</i>	<i>Wine-Cup</i>	<i>Amphora</i>
Mende (A)	x	x	x
Terone	x	x	-
Maronea (A)	x	-	-
Peparethos (A)	x	x	-
Thasos (A)	-	x	x
Lemnos (A)	x	-	-
Lampsacus (A)	-	x	x
Troad	x	x	x
Pergamum	x	-	-
Acolis	x	x	x
Tenedos	x	-	-
Lesbos (A)	-	x	x
Erythrae (A)	x	-	-
Teos	x	x	x
Chios (A)	x	x	x
Samos	-	-	x
Icaria (A)	x	x	x
Cnidus (A)	x	-	x
Myndus (A)	x	-	-
Rhodes (A)	x	-	-
Euboea (A)	x	-	-
Thebes	x	x	x
Andros	-	x	x
Tenos	x	-	-
Ceos (A)	x	-	-
Cythnos	x	-	-
Naxos (A)	x	x	-
Melos (A)	-	x	x
Amorgos	-	x	x
Cydonia	x	-	-
Sybrita	x	-	-

Note: (A) after the State's name denotes that it was known to Athenaeus as a wine producer.

Sicily, Chalcedon and the Crimea, all owned wide corn-lands; olive-oil came from Attica, Crete, Samos, Acolis and elsewhere. In every instance cited, there frequently appears on the coinage of the state a whole picture, or an adjunct type, referring to its special product.

The wine-trade, however, seems to have been more keenly advertised on coinage than any other; and if, as is possible, considerable competition between wine-growers existed, there would be an additional inducement to remind the whole world of men who handled coins about the merits of the wine one grew. A survey of 'wine-coins' might extend as far west as Sicilian Naxos on the slopes of Etna, and as far east as the Black Sea coast, where Trapezus (Trebizond) minted coins having for type a table laden with a huge bunch of grapes. But more can be learned from concentration upon a limited area – the Aegean Sea, its shores and islands. Here, in word and picture, automatically distributed to myriads of prospective purchasers, was something akin to competitive commercial advertising. But a touch of piety was present, too; for this superb wine was, after all, the gift of Dionysos to mankind. Had we included in our list other States which displayed a head of or a figure of the god, our catalogue would have been even longer.

Material evidence of the extent of the wine trade is plentiful, since the great amphorae which contained famous vintages were marked by the application of seals impressed on their handles or their stoppers. For the well-known Rhodian brands two seals were in use; some being stamped with the head of the sun-god Helios, others with the heraldic rose of Rhodes; and these badges are identical with the types of the State's coinage. Alongside these circular badges were oblong stamps, bearing the name of an official and the month when the wine was bottled. At Thasos, rectangular stamps carried the name of the vintner, a registration mark, and the word *Thasion*, 'of the Thasians'; and a number of similar vintage marks for other States are recorded. Rhodian amphorae have been found in quantities at Alexandria and Cnidian amphorae, such as regularly appear on the coinage, travelled far,

handles with the impressed stamp of Cnidus having been discovered in Sicily, Athens, Alexandria and at Olbia by the mouth of the Dneiper; while a whole vase with a Corcyraean vintage mark was found at a house in Pompeii. Pictures of ships carrying wine also survive, the oldest perhaps on a broken Corinthian terracotta tablet of about 600 B.C., which shows part of a ship, and vases in the air above it, meant to represent the cargo. This may be a shipment of vases; but, where pots were transported, jars of wine would also travel. Much later is a mosaic at Tebessa in Roman North Africa, depicting a ship-load of amphorae. Best, however, is the real thing found and recorded on the floor of the Mediterranean sea. Before the last war there was observed an ancient wreck, twenty fathoms down, off the small harbour of Albenga on the Italian Riviera. Equipment designed for raising great weights from the sea-bed was employed; and, since this had the violent effect of a bull-dozer, the ancient ship broke up, but not before there had been recovered a variety of utensils, as well as a cargo of seven hundred amphorae of wine. Since then, modern methods have developed fast; and off the Côte d'Azur, at Anthéon in the roads at Agay, men of the new profession – underwater archaeologists – have discovered at ten fathoms depth another wreck, identified as of the first century B.C., which also carried a large cargo of wine-amphorae. Philippe Diole, in *The Undersea Adventure*, has described these amphorae, and his team have photographed them lying on the tideless bed 'in the blue half-light of under-water'.

Something must be said about the grape-gathering and the conversion of the fruit into wine in ancient times. Where the usual practice of growing well-trenched dwarf-vines prevailed, vintagers would naturally kneel to collect the ripe bunches; and there are terracotta reliefs representing peasants, sometimes posed as though they were tailed satyrs, in the appropriate attitude. The handsomest wine coinage of all, that of Mende, has upon the obverse of its silver coins Dionysos himself, wine-cup in hand, reclining upon the back of a leisurely ass. On the reverse there is a

good design, a small squat grape-vine with four ripe bunches, the kind of wine one sees today wherever it can live in Greece; and the frame around the vine on the coin suggests its four-square earthy setting. Maronea – the 'Bordeaux' of the wine country of Thrace – showed on the reverse of its coinage a dwarf-vine like that of Mende. The rarer type of climbing vine appears on an Attic black-figure vase of about 650 to 540 B.C., now in the Louvre. The vine trails round the support afforded by an old dead tree-trunk, spreading on to branches which are held up by four stout wooden props. The grapes are being gathered by a number of persons, including several boys of various ages, the youngest of whom have climbed aloft into the weakest branches and trailers. A greedy dog takes a lick at an oozing bunch; and two old bearded peasants pack the grapes in baskets. They, like the boys, are naked and are pictured with hair on their chests – a sign of uncouthness in a country where depilation of chests, arms, and legs was fairly general among men of gentle birth. Once gathered, the grapes were flung into a great stone vat to be trodden rhythmically in a kind of dance, accompanied by simple music. Even today the same method, the rhythm and the musicians with their vintage melodies exist in Greece. Some of the juice, *gleukos* (Latin, *mustum*), was consumed at once, after being clarified with a dash of vinegar; some of it was placed in cauldrons and simmered to reduce the fluid, the result being a grape-jelly, *hepséma* (Latin, *defrutum*). The remaining *gleukos* – that is, the bulk of the trodden grapes – went into large bell-mouthed jars, *pithoi* (Latin, *dolia*), in which the process of fermentation took place; and this went on for about nine days, carefully watched so that the scum on top could be skimmed off. Body was given to the wine by adding a quantity of sweet *hepséma* before fermentation; and the alcoholic content of the drink would be augmented according to the amount added. Next the *pithoi* were covered with lids well rubbed with pine cones, mastic, and other herbs according to taste, in order to counteract the rum-like sweetness of the wine. Every thirty-six days the jars were inspected, and more pine cone flavour was

added. It was in the following spring that the best kinds of wine were drawn from the *pithoi*, bottled, and stoppered in the long pointed wine-amphorae ready for distribution. The interval between bottling and the consumption of the wine varied greatly, according to brand and to personal judgment and taste; and wine merchants carried cellars full. The strong reinforced wines, akin to port and sherry, were safe for keeping; the lighter ones were not, and these were generally treated with resin as a preservative, in which respect the ancient *oinos retinités* closely resembled the Greek *retsina* in constant use today.

The thyrsos, which the god Dionysos carried sceptre-like, and which the maenads and thyiads brandished in their ecstasy, was a pine-branch stripped of its needles, topped with a pine cone which was sometimes wrapped in a leafy spray of ivy. No phallic symbolism need be attached to this sacred wand; for the gummy pine-cone, and therefore the whole pine-tree, was as much sacred to the god as were the vine and the ivy. Medical opinion in ancient Greece, and to some extent in Greece now, attributed great virtue to *retinités*, more than to other wines, holding it to have a tonic quality and to cure dysenteric trouble. Today, there are those who have found the pine-resin something like a cure for arthritic complaints, which, it is said, never trouble the poorest of the Greek peasantry, who consume their *retsina* in quantities. Dionysos, like other gods, may be a healer.

Ancient Greek wines, could we sample them now, would probably taste odd at first; but we should, no doubt, acquire the taste, as many of us have acquired a taste for *retsina*. The difficulty would rather be the unknown spirituous content. A Greek would not have phrased it thus, unfamiliar as he was with chemical alcohol. But he reacted, as we do, to intoxicating drink; and this was usually his reason for diluting wine at feasts. In Plato's *Symposium*, when talk has gone on all through the night, Socrates rises from his place with the dawn and leaves in Aristodemus' company, both of them sober. Perhaps one may hazard the guess that it was the predictable strength – the 'proof' – of the famous brands

from Mende, Lesbos, Chios or Rhodes, rather than their estimation in terms of vintages and 'years', that caused their popularity. As with the proprietary brands of Scotch whisky today, you did know what you were getting. But poor wine, unfamiliar wine – like hard cider from the wood, drunk at some small West-country farm – could bring disaster, as we may learn from what is perhaps the funniest drinking story in ancient literature. A famous historian of the fourth century B.C., Timaeus of Tauromenium in Sicily, told of what happened to a party of young men who had come by sea to Akragas (Agrigento) from some other part of the Greek world. His tale runs as follows:

In Akragas there is a house which is called the 'trireme' from the following circumstances. A party of young men were drinking in it, and became so wild when over-heated by the liquor, that they imagined they were sailing in a trireme, and that they were in a bad storm on the sea. Finally they completely lost their senses, and tossed all the furniture and bedding out of the house as though upon the waters convinced that the captain directed them to lighten ship because of the raging storm. Well, a great crowd gathered and began to carry off the jetsam, but even then the young men did not cease from their mad actions. Next day police appeared at the house and lodged a complaint against the young men when they were still half-seas over. Questioned by the Magistrates, they answered that they had been much put to it by the storm and had been compelled to throw into the sea the superfluous cargo. When the authorities expressed surprise at their insanity, one of the young men, though he appeared to be the eldest of the company, said to them, 'Noble Tritons, I was so frightened that I threw myself into the lowest possible place in the hold and lay there.' The Magistrates, therefore, pardoned their delirium, but warned them never to drink too much and let them go, and they gratefully promised (to be careful). 'If,' said the oldest, 'we make port after this awful tempest, we shall raise altars in our country to you as Saviours Manifest, side by side with the Sea Gods, because you appeared to us so opportunely.' That is why the house was called the 'trireme'.

ATALANTA

ATALANTA: it is a pleasing name. Surprising that so few parents have chosen it for an infant daughter; it is warmer than 'Diana', and not frightening like 'Artemis'. Scholars, of course, have laboured to explain this fast-racing huntress as a by-form of Artemis, or as a pet lioness of the Asiatic Cybele, or as a young she-bear. Some postulated two Atalantas because of incompatibilities in the stories, but here dichotomy is inept. Philologists have wrestled with her name, interpreting it to mean 'Incomparable', 'Dominatrix', 'Much-enduring', or 'Impregnable'. Forget these details for a while, and attend to the composite stories current in different parts of Greece about her life and loves. Her father, a local laird, longing for a son, was annoyed at having a girl-child and had the infant exposed on a mountain near a cave. A lonely she-bear who had lost her cubs suckled the baby, who grew to be an athletic devotee of huntress Artemis. In time news spread that a monstrous boar was laying waste the land of Ætolia, and from various regions came famous hunters, including Atalanta, to kill the brute. The men, running true to form, refused at first to go out with a woman in the field; but Meleager, Prince of Calydon, who had sent out invitations for the great hunt, fell in love with the girl at sight and insisted on her joining in the chase. Some said that her spear was the first to wound the great boar, which Meleager presently killed, and so he gallantly gave her the mask and tushes and hide of the boar. Much masculine ill-will ensued, and attempts were made to rob the girl of her trophy.

Wrestling was in her line, as well as hunting, for the story goes that she competed in the funeral games held for Pelias, King of Iolkos, and, wrestling with no less a hero than young Peleus, later

the father of Achilles, she overcame him. Some said that she presently joined the Argonauts and pulled an oar with the other heroes all the way to Colchis; but others alleged that the skipper would not sign her on because her beauty would cause certain trouble among the crew. Perhaps it was after this, according to one version of the story, that her unworthy father decided to recognize his famous daughter, whose hand was now sought in marriage by many a well-known sprinter and miler in Greece. She was naturally both reluctant and ruthless; therefore the conditions for all suitors were: 'outrun the girl or pay with your life'. The fairy-tale does not record how many died, nor is it consistent about the name of the splendid young man who at last won the race and the girl. Some called him Hippomenes, others Meilanon; and never forget that he won by the trick of throwing away gewgaws to distract her. The girl was always the better runner. So they were married and started off on their honeymoon; but alas, concupiscence and carelessness combined to bring about an unfortunate result. It was a shady grove in a woodland glade where they lay down to rest and were mingled in love, not perceiving that this was a holy place where their act was sacrilege. But some god saw. Promptly they were turned into a lion and a lioness. Who shall say whether this was a happy or an unhappy ending?

Now, if the story or stories about Atalanta were just a part of the general stuff of Greek myth, it would scarce be worth retelling; but it is more than that, because the vast and varied and enduring popularity of these stories among the Greeks is the symbol of an aspect of ancient Greek life which nowadays receives too little attention – of athleticism among girls; whereas we all think of Greek athletics as only for boys and men. Atalanta is, in a sense, the feminine counterpart of those indefatigable heroes, Herakles* and Theseus, whose memory inspired every aspiring Greek athletic boy. The important point is that you only evolve, embroider

* Kyrene, another huntress-nymph, was said to have strangled a lion – a 'she-Herakles' indeed! Kyrene attained goddess-status even as Herakles became a god (see Pindar, *Ninth Pythian Ode*); but she is not relevant to athletics.

and recite legends about an imaginary athlete-heroine because your civilization affords some scope for young females to be athletic. No mediaeval maiden ever stripped to wrestle with a troubadour; no virgin martyr ever raced in the Hippodrome against a saintly deacon; no houri ever left a harem to hunt wild boar on foot. The answer is: 'no scope, no legend'. But where there is legend there is, somewhere, scope.

In the modern world the institution of team-games and athletics for boys dates from the time of Dr Arnold of Rugby. It does not spring solely from a study of the Classics; for no one ever studied Greek and Latin with greater zeal and passion than the great scholars of the Renaissance; yet they never attempted to organize sport in the ancient Greek sense. Lytton Strachey in *Eminent Victorians* declared that, before Arnold's day, 'when school hours were over the boys were free to enjoy themselves as they liked . . . the taste of the boys leaned strongly towards flowers; the words have an odd look to-day.' But Arnold, a fine scholar devoted to Herodotus and Thucydides, was, as father of the Public School system, the man responsible for the cult of athletics. 'The earnest enthusiast,' wrote Lytton Strachey, 'who strove to make his pupils Christian gentlemen and who governed his School according to the principles of the Old Testament, has proved to be the founder of the worship of athletics and the worship of good form.' And from his day on a lively interest in the athletics of ancient Greece began and increased. Yet this meant, of course, only athletics for boys and young men. The daughters of the nobility and gentry might ride, but the mere idea that delicately nurtured young gentlewomen should ever play any game tougher than croquet was an idea so dreadful that only a depraved mind could have entertained it. When, in the course of their reading, Dr Arnold and contemporary scholars came, as they must have come, on certain allusions to athletic Greek girls, they perhaps passed over them hastily as *pudendum quid*. After all, there were some things one would prefer not to remember about those glorious 'Grecians'. The originally close association between the

Public School system and athletics is the main explanation of the almost complete neglect of the subject of Greek girl athleticism – a neglect which this essay attempts to remedy.

It will be best to begin by mentioning some of the literary evidence for athleticism among girls in ancient Greece, and then to follow this up by a short account of some monumental evidence provided by Greek painting and sculpture. The *locus classicus* is the fourteenth chapter of Plutarch's *Life of Lycurgus* which describes how, under the Spartan Code, careful provision was made for the health and fitness of girls who were to be the future mothers of Spartans. Their sports were running, wrestling, throwing the discus and hurling the javelin. The girls, like the boys, stripped both for games and for processions, and everyone in Sparta, including visitors, looked on at the events; except for confirmed Spartan bachelors, who (punished by a variety of disabilities) were excluded from watching the games. There is a striking comment on this custom in the *Andromache* of Euripides (lines 595-600) written between 430 and 424 B.C. The speaker is Peleus; that same Peleus who as a young man had wrestled with Atalanta and been worsted by her, and who was therefore apt to be bitter about girl-wrestlers. He snarls at Spartan ways, and his snarls went down well with the audience in the Athenian theatre, for the war with Sparta was on:

Wish as you might a Spartan girl never could be virtuous. They gad abroad with young men, and, with naked thighs and clothes discarded, they race with 'em, wrestle with 'em! Intolerable! ...

By contrast to this, Plato, in the mid-fourth century B.C. (*Laws* 833 c, d), gave his full approval to the Spartan system of education for girls.

In the greatest of all athletic centres in the ancient world, Olympia itself, some provision was made for girl athletes, as well as for the great champions of the Hellenic world. A body known as the 'Sixteen Women of Elis' was a kind of standing committee of County gentlewomen. In the fifth book and the sixteenth chapter

of his *Description of Greece*, Pausanias, the Traveller, reported that the Sixteen Women arrange every fourth year –

... games called the Heraia. The games consist of a race between girls. The girls are not all of the same age; but the youngest run first, the next in age run next, and the eldest girls run last of all. They run thus: their hair hangs down, they wear a chiton which reaches to a little above the knee, the right shoulder is bare to below the breast. ... The winners receive crowns of olive and a share of the cow which is sacrificed to Hera; moreover, they are allowed to dedicate statues of themselves with their names.

There is something from Athens, too, despite the distinction, often emphasized, between the free and easy life of Spartan women and the more domesticated life of the Athenians. Yet this should not be overstressed: such a play as Aristophanes' *Lysistrata* can hardly be deemed the picture of a cloistered life. Before marriage, however, it is probable that Athenian girls engaged in games and athletics, and it is certain that the girls of Ionian Chios did so.

Light on some aspect of Greek life comes through to us now and then only by way of a chance allusion. You would not suppose that little Athenian girls between seven and eleven years old played hockey: but apparently they did. Certain of these children were selected to help in the cult of Athene on the Acropolis and were called *Arrephoroi*. They had a *sphairistra*, 'Ball-ground' or playground, up there, and in this was to be seen a bronze statue of Isocrates, later the famous orator, as a young boy with a hockey stick.* Was he captain of a boys' team which played against the girls? If not, what reason could there have been for putting his statue there? Athletic co-education, for which Sparta was famous, also existed in the large island of Chios, where boys and girls competed against one another in running and wrestling on the run-

* Pseudo-Plutarch, *Lives of the Ten Orators*, 839 c.

Some scholars have thought that barbarian girls by the shores of Lake Tritonis (now Shott el Jerid in Tunisia) played a very rough kind of hockey with sticks and stone balls at the annual festival of their armed goddess, equated by Herodotus (iv, 179f.) with Athene.

ning-tracks and in the gymnasia. This is recorded by the learned Athenacus.*

The last literary passage to be mentioned is the tale of an expert swimmer, the professional diving-girl Hydna. When the Persians under Xerxes invaded Greece in 480 B.C., and when their fleet, overtaken by a hurricane, took refuge in a bay off Mount Pelion in Thessaly, there were two courageous Greeks from Skione who did the enemy ships much damage. They were the diver Skyllis and his daughter, Hydna, whom he had taught his profession. Pausanias, the Traveller, in his tenth book and nineteenth chapter, tells how father and daughter completed the disaster by diving under water and dragging away the anchors and moorings of the war-galleys from below. Though this was an achievement different from ordinary athletic games, it deserved record and the Delphians thought so highly of it that they set up bronze statues of Skyllis and his daughter. But the statue of Hydna was carried off by the Emperor Nero from Delphi to Rome.

Monuments are in some ways more enlightening than ancient texts, for there can be no doubt that archaeology is on occasion the better part of history. Painting shall claim our attention before sculpture because it is more securely datable and better documented, and because the heroine Atalanta appears on vase paintings for more than two centuries at various dates between about 560 and 350 B.C. But before contemplating pictures of Atalanta as patroness of athletic girls, there is one peculiar painting of the mid-sixth century on fragments of an Ionian vase, perhaps made at Clazomenae and now in the British Museum, which must arrest our attention. It is the picture of a plump naked girl riding astride on a plump well-fed horse which is led by a bearded man, while a large puppy trots beside them. This picture, it must be admitted, runs counter to all preconceived ideas. Amazons in Greek art rode astride, but were always clad and armed, for they were barbarians, not Greeks. Greek women rode on animals, not side-saddle with a pommel, but side-ways as Greek peasant women do to this

* Book xiii, 566 c.

day. But this girl seated on a saddle-cloth rides astride like a boy *ephebe*, by balance and knee-grip. Indeed, one eminent German scholar has been so startled by the picture that he will have her to be 'ein Knabe' – manifestly absurd! Since in Chios it is recorded that girls ran against and wrestled with boys, it seems possible that, less than forty miles away, at Clazomenae with its kindred Ionian social background, girls may have raced on horseback, and if she were a girl-jockey, the bearded man might be her trainer.

When Greek vase-painters depicted Atalanta, they tended to crowd into one picture allusions to several of her achievements simultaneously. The Athenian Kleitias, painter about 560 B.C. of the famous François Vase in Florence, represented the Hunt of the great wild boar, and set beside the heroine Prince Meleager of Calydon, who fell in love with her and gave her the trophy, as well as Peleus, with whom she was later to wrestle, and Meilanion who by a trick beat her in the foot-race – later again – and married her. All the participants have their names written beside them. Atalanta wears a short tunic girt up round the waist, and her legs and arms are bare.

When the older black-figure style was being replaced in Athens by the red-figure style, a painter named Oltos, who worked between about 525 and 510 B.C., set the same wrestling-match on the side of a drinking-cup, now in Bologna, and a change of garb is introduced. Peleus, like all Greek wrestlers, is naked, and Atalanta nearly so. But she wears a cap, to keep her hair and ears from being seized, and a neat little pair of shorts, upon which you may see embroidered a tiny lioness – prophetic of the fate that was later to befall her.

About 460 B.C. a new and more 'professional' presentation of her is depicted inside a drinking cup in the Louvre, painted by an artist known as the Euaion Painter. This delightful miniature shows Atalanta standing, facing, her name – *Atalanté* in Athenian usage – inscribed above her. To her right is the winning-post in the stadium, and above it hang her oil flask and her strigil, or scraper, which all athletes employed. In her left hand is a slender

stick, such as umpires and trainers of boys often carry, and this is to remind you that she may personate the Games Mistress. She is, however, not dressed for running, but for wrestling; hence the tight-fitting cap with ear-cover and chin-strap, the brief shorts, embroidered with a palmette, and the briefer brassière, embroidered with stars. Akin to this presentation is a picture, sadly fragmentary, upon part of what was once a large Athenian red-figure mixing-bowl, painted about 440 B.C. It shows various heroes preparing for the funeral games of King Pelias at Iolkos. To the right of this fragmentary piece is the boxer Amykos who was knocked out and killed by Polydeukes, twin-brother of Kastor; at the left end a young bearded man with a wreath, traveller's hat and cloak is Jason himself, captain of the Argonauts. Between those figures is a youth, named Hippomenes, seated; and this is, according to one version, the name of the youth who much later on was destined to outrun Atalanta and win her by a trick. Here he is not her rival but her devoted admirer. Meanwhile, Atalanta in the centre prepares herself not for running but for wrestling, for this was the occasion when she defeated Peleus in the match. Her arms are raised above her head as she adjusts her close-fitting cap with its ear-flap, and she wears a fairly tight brassière in which are openings to allow part of each breast freedom.

There are on numerous other vases pictures of Atalanta, some of which tend to give her an Aphrodite-like glamour, but such pictures are moving away from the tough, athletic-girl types of the earlier phase in which the truly remarkable thing is her costume. Three painters – Oltos, about 520 B.C., the Euaion Painter about 460 B.C., and the Polygnotan associate about 440 B.C. – are in general agreement and equip her variously with wrestler's cap, brassière, and shorts. Earlier, about 560 B.C., black-figure vase-painters showed her as a huntress with skirts girt-up, rather like an Artemis. But these red-figure painters are much more concerned with realism. Certain men, painting on pots in the Ceramicus at Athens, did not just invent this costume out of their

heads. Somewhere, sometime, they had been spectators in a gymnasium where girls wrestled equipped as Atalanta is equipped in these paintings. It can hardly have been in Athens; for assuredly Aristophanes would have mentioned or Euripides deplored the practice: therefore, probably in Chios which, when these vases were painted, was either friendly with or allied to Athens. There, as already stated, athletic co-education encouraged girls and boys to compete against one another in wrestling. And this Greek way of wrestling was probably not very rough, for in Plato's view (*Laws* 795 e, ff., 833 c) it was akin to dancing; in fact, a form of ballet in which the holds were perhaps stylized and movements rhythmically made. Plato would have classified twentieth-century ball-room dancing as vestigial wrestling.

Sculpture made during the fifth and fourth centuries B.C. adds something to our knowledge about Greek girl athletes. While countless original bronze figures have vanished, copies of some of them made to the order of Romans enable us to recognize the appearance, but rarely the quality, of the lost originals. Nero carried off from Delphi to Rome the bronze statue of Hydria, the diver who helped to wreck the Persian fleet, and it seems possible that some wealthy Roman ordered a marble replica of her, which was discovered on the Esquiline Hill and is now in the Palazzo Conservatori in Rome. She is short, dumpy, youthful and possessed of a deep and wide chest such as divers who stay long under water must necessarily have. On general stylistic grounds, the lost original from which this marble was copied should have belonged to a period not very long after the Persian Wars when the statue was set up in Delphi. Her arms were raised, and she was tying a scarf round her hair before entering the water.

In the Vatican Museum there is another marble replica of a lost bronze which can be attributed with far greater confidence. Remember that worthy committee known as the 'Sixteen Women of Elis' who organized at Olympia races for girls; and remember that girls who won were allowed to dedicate statues of themselves. A wealthy Roman, perhaps of the second century

A.D., fascinated by one of these dedicated bronze statues, had a copy made of it in marble. The clumsiness of that copy has been worsened by some Italian restorer who attached to it false arms in wrong positions. But, with a little care, it has been possible to make a reconstructed sketch of the lost original, reviving the appearance of a Greek fifth-century girl who won the race and dedicated to Hera at Olympia a statue of herself as she rounded the turning-post at the far end of the Olympic Stadium. Her garb and hair exactly correspond to the description, cited above, given by Pausanias, the Traveller, who wrote in about A.D. 173 or 177, during the reign of the Emperor Marcus Aurelius, as an eye-witness to these races.

This essay has sought to bring forward certain aspects of Greek life concerned with the athleticism of young women before marriage; but boys, youths and men were then, as now, the athletes in whose achievements the public really took an interest. It could not be otherwise. Chronology itself for the ancient Greeks depended on a system of dating by the names of victors in the Olympic foot-race. The significant fact is that in ancient Greece some girls were free to be athletic, and this fact has not yet received adequate recognition. What has been shown, in quoted text and painted vase and brazen statue and chiselled marble, is evidence of life and youth, health and adventure in the ancient Greek world. Some of these qualities and experiences may even have lasted for some girls as late as A.D. 200, or thereabouts. But when the status of women was lowered, all such fun came to an end and a deep depression set in. Reflect on what followed: the long history of misogyny fostered by St Paul, Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria and Anselm of Canterbury, as well as by Calvin, Knox and Rousseau. Reflect on this in order] to appreciate the glowing life of our healthy little Atalantas and Olympic racers.

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In addition, Dr Seltman edited the volumes of Plates in the *Cambridge Ancient History*, as follows: Vol. I, 1926; Vol. II, 1928; Vol. III, 1930; Vol. IV, 1934; Vol. V, 1939.







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